United Nations A/71/PV.7

General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

7th plenary meeting
Monday, 19 September 2016, 7.30 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 7.40 p.m.

High-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants

Agenda items 13 and 117 *(continued)*

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Co-Chair Thomson: As we begin the closing events of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, it is my pleasure to present the global première of a special version of John Lennon's iconic song, entitled "Imagine". A collaboration among UNICEF, Ms. Yoko Ono and French music producer David Guetta, the video brings together thousands of voices from around the world to shine a spotlight on issues facing the most vulnerable people.

We will now see the video.

A video presentation was broadcast in the General Assembly Hall.

Co-Chair Thomson: It is now my honour to give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, who will deliver closing remarks that will include a summary of the plenary debate and the six interactive multi-stakeholder round tables.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Today has been a historic day. I do not even have to imagine this. It is a reality, and I think that that wonderful song in this setting proves the power of music and culture. Maybe we should do more of that in the United Nations.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I congratulate Member States on having adopted by consensus the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1, annex). This shows that despite differing perspectives, we can unite around common principles and around core commitments to refugees and migrants. Large movements of refugees and migrants present some of the most challenging issues of our time. Individually, many Member States today have demonstrated positive approaches to refugees and migrants. They have saved the lives of migrants at sea. They have treated migrants humanely. They have extended protection to refugees. Yes, all this is to be commended.

However, we know that no one State can deal with these transnational issues by acting alone. We must work together, more than ever before. The situation today requires urgent attention and urgent action. Today, we have heard moving accounts that brought to this beautiful Hall the stark reality of being a refugee or a migrant — suffering in times of war, the unimaginable sexual violence and exploitation and the experience of alienation and discrimination in a new land. But they also told us about the rebuilding of their lives, about their skills and capacities finally being used and about how the global community needs to act.

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In both the plenary meetings and the round tables today, representatives have emphasized the centrality of human rights for migrants and refugees and reaffirmed their international obligations. They have committed to tackling the discrimination and gender-based violence that women and girls face everywhere. Many have highlighted the negative consequence of irregular migration. They have called for greater cooperation to address the despicable human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and refugees. States have also recognized the strain on countries that host large numbers of refugees. They have agreed to implement a comprehensive response to large refugee movements, not least in protracted crisis situations.

Today, several representatives have also shared plans to expand financial assistance, taking into account both the humanitarian and the development aspects. New financial mechanisms have been announced to increase support to host countries and host communities. We have heard concrete examples of the private sector creating jobs for refugees, and how Member States have supported such efforts. It has been encouraging to hear that additional countries have joined in the efforts to provide resettlement space or alternative pathways for the admission of refugees.

We must also rally behind the call in the Declaration to ensure that all migrant and refugee girls and boys have access to education within a few months of their arrival. It was widely recognized that we must increase financial support for the education of refugee children and youth.

Development programmes are also crucial and a key priority. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the contribution that migration makes to economic and social progress. We must harness that positive energy. To do so requires improved data on migration patterns and impacts, as many speakers have emphasized.

We also require a clear-headed and informed policy debate, one that avoids stigmatizing refugees or migrants. The Secretary-General's launch this morning of a global campaign to combat xenophobia, entitled "Together — Respect, Safety and Dignity for All", is receiving broad support and affirmation. We look forward to working with Member States and partners on that project.

Today, many Member States have declared their intention to incorporate refugees and migrants in national development planning. That will foster more coherent planning and break down the silos that isolate humanitarian assistance from development work, which is such a crucial task for all of us. At the same time, we must ensure that commitments for official development assistance are being met. Creating jobs and investing in youth are critical for making migration a choice, not a necessity.

With regard to attaining peace and security, it is with great hope and anticipation that we have heard in this Hall a strong call for prevention and resolution of armed conflicts. Violent conflicts are often the source of mass displacement, as we all know. Acting early and with foresight and responsibility must be a guiding principle for our work. The shocking images we see and the human stories we hear touch all of us around the world. Therefore, we must look not only to Governments, but also to others for action. Civil society and the private sector have shown engagement and taken innovative approaches when faced with refugee and migrant movements.

We acknowledge the many steps and tasks on the road ahead, such as agreeing on how to govern migration effectively, learning how to successfully integrate refugees and migrants into our societies, and how to increase cooperation to assist migrants in vulnerable situations. Given the urgency of all these challenges, the implementation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1, annex) must begin now, at home and internationally.

Member States have set critical deadlines. By 2018, we aim to have adopted a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration — a formula that, by the way, is also taken from the Sustainable Development Goals. We also want to achieve a more equitable sharing of the responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees by adopting a global compact on refugees in 2018.

The United Nations system will now mobilize for a comprehensive follow-up process. We have taken an important step today by bringing the International Organization for Migration into the United Nations system as a related organization. In so doing, we recognize its unique and valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations on migration. That makes the United Nations system stronger as we rise to meet our new challenges and to seize opportunities. The New York Declaration calls for ongoing follow-up of

our commitments. It would be helpful to take stock a year from now to ensure that we are on track for meeting our objectives by 2018. As one of our young refugee speakers reminded us this morning, refugees are already taking action; now is the time for the international community to act.

In closing, let me say that it will take determined and collective efforts to address large movements of refugees and migrants in the world. We need to prevent and speedily resolve political crises. We need to respond to humanitarian crises. We need to engage in informed policy debate, as we have started to do today. We need to protect the human rights of all. We need to address root causes and ensure that no one is left behind. And we need to counter polarizing forces that aim to instil fear and divide us into "us" and "them".

Some of the refugees and migrants who joined us today suffered terrible ordeals. They have demonstrated courage, resilience and offered a measure of hope. We must respond by carrying out the New York Declaration in that same spirit. Together — and "together" is perhaps the most important word in the world today — we can shape a new future. This must be a future in which migrants and refugees, host nations and host communities can live together in harmony, well-being and mutual respect, and today Member States have started this work. Let us go to work together.

Co-Chair Thomson: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now make a few brief remarks before closing.

I join in thanking all Member States for their high level of participation in today's summit; it reflects the gravity of the situation before us and our collective commitment to finding humane global solutions to address this crisis. But our actions must not stop here.

We must move quickly to fulfil the commitments made today. We must continue to give the refugee and migrant crisis the attention, energy and support that it needs. We must redouble our efforts to protect the human rights of refugees and migrants. We must counter racism, xenophobia and others forms of intolerance that seek to dehumanize vulnerable people in need. Most importantly, we must push for the universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will help to address many of the root causes that drive people to flee.

I stand ready to work with Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and other key stakeholders throughout the General Assembly at its seventy-first session so that we may find durable solutions that meet this moral imperative of our time. As I said in my opening remarks this morning,

> "I urge Member States to maintain their high levels of ambition throughout these processes and to always reach for the higher ground on the basis of our common humanity and our values of decency and equality. The well-being of millions rests with us at the United Nations, and we must not fail them in their hour of need"(*A/71/PV.3, p. 2*).

I cannot close this evening without congratulating Member States and all those who made possible the adoption today of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1, annex). I see many of them in the Hall this evening, and I acknowledge their presence. On behalf of migrants and refugees everywhere, I thank everyone.

I now declare closed the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.

United Nations A/71/PV.8

General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-first session

8th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 2016, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Agenda item 109

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/71/1)

The President: In accordance with the decision taken at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2016, the General Assembly will hear a presentation by the Secretary-General of his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/71/1), under agenda item 109.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I stand before the Assembly today with gratitude for the support I have been given across the decade during which I have had the privilege to serve the great Organization of the United Nations. In taking the oath of office in December 2006, I pledged to work with the Organization for "we, the peoples". With the Charter of the United Nations as our guide and the dedication of the staff, we have achieved much together.

I also stand here in deep concern. Gulfs of mistrust divide citizens from their leaders. Extremists push people into camps of "us" and "them". The Earth assails us with rising seas, record heat and extreme storms. And danger defines the days of many. One hundred and thirty million people need lifesaving assistance; tens of millions of them are children and young people, so that our next generation already at risk.

Yet after 10 years in office, I am more convinced than ever that we have the power to end war, poverty and persecution. We have the means to prevent conflict. We have the potential to close the gap between rich and poor, and to make rights a reality in people's lives. With the Sustainable Development Goals, we have a manifesto for a better future. With the Paris Agreement on climate change, we are tackling the defining challenge of our time. We have no time to lose. I urge all the leaders here to bring the Paris Agreement into force before the end of this year. We need just 26 countries more, representing just 15 per cent of greenhouse-gas emissions. I ask all those here to help lead us to a world of low-carbon growth, increased resilience and greater opportunity and well-being for our children.

Those great gains are threatened by grave security threats. Armed conflicts have grown more protracted and complex. Governance failures have pushed societies past the brink. Radicalization has threatened social cohesion, which is precisely the response that violent extremists seek and welcome. The tragic consequences are on brutal display from Yemen to Libya and Iraq, from Afghanistan to the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin.

In today's world, the conflict in Syria is taking the greatest number of lives and sowing the widest instability. There is no military solution. Many groups have killed many innocents, but none more so than the Government of Syria, which continues to barrel-bomb neighbourhoods and systematically torture thousands of detainees. Powerful patrons who keep feeding the war machine also have blood on their hands. Present in this Hall today are representatives of Governments that have ignored, facilitated, funded, participated in

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and even planned and carried out atrocities inflicted on Syrian civilians by every side in the Syria conflict.

Just when we think it cannot get any worse, the bar of depravity sinks lower. Yesterday's sickening, savage and apparently deliberate attack on a United Nations-Syrian Arab Red Crescent aid convoy is the latest example. The United Nations has been forced to suspend aid convoys as a result of that outrage. The humanitarians delivering life-saving aid were heroes. Those who bombed them were cowards. Accountability for crimes such as these is essential. I appeal to all those with influence to end the fighting and get talks started. A political transition is long overdue. After so much violence and misrule, the future of Syria should not rest on the fate of a single man.

One year ago, Palestine proudly raised its flag at United Nations Headquarters, yet the prospects for a two-State solution are decreasing every day, while the occupation grinds into its fiftieth year. As a friend of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, it pains me that the past decade has been 10 years lost to peace; 10 years lost to illegal settlement expansion; 10 years lost to intra-Palestinian divide, growing polarization and hopelessness. This is madness. Replacing a two-State solution with a one-State construct would spell doom, denying Palestinians their freedom and rightful future, and pushing Israel further from its vision of a Jewish democracy towards greater global isolation.

On the Korean peninsula, the fifth nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has again threatened regional and international security. Meanwhile, their people's suffering and plight are worsening. I urge the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change course and fulfil their obligations — to their own people and to the family of nations.

In Ukraine, the violence has caused an internal upheaval, renewed tensions across Europe and rekindled geopolitical rivalries. In South Sudan, leaders have also betrayed their people. Indeed, in too many places, we see leaders rewriting constitutions, manipulating elections and taking other desperate steps to cling to power. Those who hold office must understand that it is a privilege entrusted to them by the people, not their personal property. My message to all is clear — serve the people, do not subvert democracy, do not pilfer the country's resources and do not imprison and torture critics.

Yesterday we made great progress in helping people find a haven from conflict and tyranny. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) points the way toward saving lives and protecting the rights of millions of people. We all must meet those promises. All too often, refugees and migrants face hatred. Muslims in particular are being targeted by stereotyping and suspicion that evoke haunting echoes of the dark past. I urge political leaders and candidates to not engage in the cynical and dangerous political math of adding votes by dividing people and multiplying fear. The world must stand up against lies and distortions of truth, and reject all forms of discrimination.

We must also address the factors that compel people to move. That means investing in conflict prevention and engaging in patient diplomacy. As the demand for peacekeeping rises, we must continue strengthening peace operations to help countries secure and maintain peace. I am encouraged that the General Assembly has endorsed the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which can help us tackle the drivers of conflict.

In Myanmar, the transition has entered a promising new phase. In Sri Lanka, post-war healing efforts have deepened. In both countries, true reconciliation rests on ensuring that all communities, minorities and majorities alike, are included in building a real union. Next Monday, I will travel to Colombia for the signing of a peace agreement to end one of the world's longest-running armed conflicts. The United Nations will support the Colombian people every step of the way. There is also encouraging momentum towards an agreement on Cyprus. Let us all support the progress and solutions that may now be at hand.

(*spoke in French*)

I take this opportunity to express my regrets on two matters that have tarnished the Organization's reputation, and far worse, have traumatized the many populations we serve.

First of all, the despicable acts of exploitation and sexual violence committed by some peacekeeping soldiers and other United Nations personnel have compounded the suffering of people already embroiled in armed conflict and have undermined the efforts of so many other United Nations agencies worldwide. Those who would protect must never become predators. Member States and the Secretariat must redouble their

efforts to enforce and bolster the Organization's zero-tolerance policy.

Secondly, Haiti has been sorely tested. Shortly after a devastating earthquake, the country was hit by a cholera outbreak. I am deeply saddened by the terrible suffering of the Haitian people affected by cholera. We must devise a new approach to ease their plight and improve their living conditions. We are firmly resolved to take sustainable action to shoulder that moral responsibility. We are currently drafting a set of measures to assist those most directly affected, and we are intensifying efforts to set up robust water, sanitation and health systems, which is the best long-term protection against disease. We cannot succeed without the unwavering political and financial support of Member States. Details on that strategy are forthcoming. Let us pool our efforts to honour our obligations to the Haitian people.

(*spoke in English*)

Allow me to briefly touch on a few other areas that I hope will long remain priorities of the United Nations.

I am proud that UN-Women came to life during my tenure. It is now our established champion of gender equality and empowerment, seeking to bring about a 50-50 planet. I have appointed more women to senior positions at the United Nations than ever before — and I am proud to call myself a feminist. Women hold up half the sky and are essential to meeting all our goals. I have always said that the least utilized resource in the world is the potential of women. So we must do far more to end deep-seated discrimination and chronic violence against women, to advance their participation in decision-making and to ensure that every girl gets the start in life she deserves.

I have been a proud defender of the rights of all people, regardless of ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. Our human rights machinery, along with the Human Rights Up Front initiative, is placing human rights at the centre. Human rights are the pillars of society and the antidotes to violent extremism and civic despair.

We have deepened support for the responsibility to protect. We have made inroads against the death penalty. Landmark convictions by the International Criminal Court and other bodies have advanced accountability, but we still must do far more to prevent genocide and other atrocity crimes. Civil society is essential to all of these efforts.

I ask all present to join me today in saying "yes" to greater space for civil society and independent media, and "no" to cracking down on the freedoms of assembly and expression.

(*spoke in French*)

In the past 10 years, we have made great progress in education and health. Polio has almost been eradicated, more women survive childbirth, and more children are in school and live longer, better lives. Our collective response to the Ebola outbreak has prepared us for future health emergencies. The work of the Global Health Crises Task Force reminds us that vigilance must start well before pandemics reach the front pages. The control of deadly weapons advanced thanks to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Arms Trade Treaty and effective action against chemical weapons.

We need to build on this momentum to move closer to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons once and for all. The World Humanitarian Summit strengthened relief efforts to focus on prevention and resilience as well as on reducing need. We are tapping the energies of young people as never before, including thanks to the work of my first-ever United Nations Envoy on Youth as well as the new Special Envoy on Youth Employment. Partnerships with the private sector have multiplied. We have pushed for responsible practices that harness the best of business for society and the world, and we have made important strides in adapting and reforming the United Nations for the twenty-first century.

(*spoke in English*)

Continued progress will require new heights of solidarity. Sometimes we are our own worst enemies. Member States have still not agreed on a formula for reform of the Security Council, which poses a continuing risk to its effectiveness and legitimacy.

In the same spirit, I want to put on the table today a major and much-needed reform for fairness and effectiveness in the United Nations. Far too often, I have seen widely supported proposals blocked, in the name of consensus, by a few or sometimes even just one country. We see this being done by large and small countries alike. Time and again, I have seen essential action and good ideas blocked in the Security Council, blocked in the General Assembly, blocked in the budget process, blocked in the Conference on Disarmament

and other bodies. We see this being done by large and small countries alike.

Is it fair, in this complicated twenty-first century, for any one country, or a few countries, to yield such disproportionate power and hold the world hostage on so many important issues?

Consensus should not be confused with unanimity. The global public is right to ask whether this is how an Organization in which we have invested so much hope and so many aspirations should function. I propose, Mr. President, that you explore, with my successor, the establishment of a high-level panel to find practical solutions that will improve decision-making at the United Nations.

States must also respect the independence of the Secretariat, in accordance with the Charter. When our reports say what needs to be said, Member States should not try to rewrite history. When our human rights personnel act on behalf of the most vulnerable, Member States should not block their path. When our humanitarian workers need to reach populations under siege, Member States should remove all obstacles. And when our envoys and personnel raise difficult issues, Member States should not ostracize them or threaten to banish them from the country. We must all be open and accountable to the people we serve.

There is one last measure of the change that has defined the past decade.

It is hard to believe, but when I took office, a smartphone like this had not even been introduced to the world. Today it is a lifeline and perhaps, at times, the bane of our existence. It is an indispensable part of our lives. Our phones and social media have connected the world in ways that were unimaginable when I took office. Yes, they have been abused by extremists and hate groups. But they have also created a world of new communities and opportunities. For me, it is all a reminder of the power of individuals to change the world.

After all, people power helped make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) the most inclusive development process of our time. People power mobilized millions to push leaders to take climate action. People power is what I have seen in every corner of the world this past decade: people like Rebecca Johnson, a nurse I met in Sierra Leone who contracted Ebola, recovered and then risked her life again to save her community; and people like Yusra Mardini, the Syrian teen swimmer who pushed her damaged refugee boat to safety and then went on to compete in the Olympic Games; and, of course, people like young Malala Yousafzai, who came to the United Nations and showed us all how one book, one pen and one person could make a difference.

A perfect world may be on the far horizon, but the route to a better world, a safer world, a more trusted world, is in each and every one of us. Ten years on, I know that, working together, working united, we can get there. I count on members' leadership and commitment.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Statement by the President

The President: It is my privilege today to open the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. In exercising this privilege, I am greatly humbled, as a proud Fijian citizen, to know that this is the first time in the seven decades of the history of the United Nations that a President of the Assembly has hailed from one of the Pacific island nations.

Three hundred and sixty-one days ago in this great Hall, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted. The result of two years of intense, multilateral negotiations, the 2030 Agenda's adoption was like a beacon of hope raised to guide all humankind to a better world. With its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda is hugely ambitious. Imbued with a universal and transformative spirit, the 2030 Agenda sets out a master plan for us to transform our world into one in which extreme poverty has been eliminated and peaceful, well governed societies live sustainably and in harmony with our environment. Essentially, it provides for a future in which generations to come will live securely in a loving world.

How are we progressing? Our first great indication of progress is that the Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted in Paris and we are moving steadily towards its ratification. I salute the Secretary-General for his tireless work in that area and congratulate the Governments that have ratified the Agreement. Overcoming the challenges of climate change is the existential responsibility of our time. We must not delay any further, and it is encouraging to see that more energy is being produced from more affordable,

renewable sources than ever before, and more resources are going to climate adaptation.

It is heartening to see that the number of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from communicable diseases, like polio and malaria, continues to decrease. It is evident that the 2030 Agenda is being increasingly used as the framework for improved national development plans around the world. But we are far from where we need to be.

Millions of people around the globe are suffering the brutal effects of war. The crisis in Syria continues to bring immense human suffering to the Syrian people, for both those who have fled in search of sanctuary and those who have stayed under inhumane conditions. I strongly condemn the attacks on a United Nations aid convoy that was seeking to bring desperately needed food and medical supplies to people in need. The deliberate targeting of humanitarian personnel is a flagrant violation of international law and totally morally unacceptable.

Around the world, more than 60 million people are on the move, many risking their lives to flee conflict or disaster. Week after week, innocent people are falling victim to the despicable acts of violent extremists. The gap between rich and poor, between men and women, between developing countries and advanced economies remains stubbornly high. At a time when collaboration and partnership are needed more than ever, we are witnessing increasing xenophobia, divisive rhetoric and attacks on our human rights and fundamental freedoms. Meanwhile, global greenhouse-gas emissions continue to rise. Incredible damage is being done to our oceans and seas, and the window of opportunity to avert catastrophic climate change is rapidly closing.

Taken together, it is clear that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is not yet producing the results that our world so desperately needs. What are we therefore going to do about it? There is only one answer: we must do better to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to teach our young people about the Goals, because for the required transformation to occur, it must first take hold in our minds and in our values. It is our children who will be the inheritors of the Agenda's results, so every classroom around the world should be teaching the Sustainable Development Goals. I encourage all members to achieve that reality. Greater public resources must be dedicated to achieving the SDGs, either directly through domestic finance or through official development assistance such as climate financing. We need to create better regulatory environments and to require the international financial system to ensure that financing is increasingly focused on productive, green and socially responsible investment. We must support greater access for poor and marginalized communities and countries to science, technology and innovation, to trade opportunities and to more sustainable debt solutions. We can, and must, work better on sustaining peace, preventing and responding to conflict and in managing the global humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Collective action by Member States must be advanced. Strategic and inclusive partnerships must be forged to meet the global challenges we face — from climate change to conflict, from violent extremism and terrorism to the contagious diseases that threaten humankind. As President of the General Assembly, I assure the Assembly that I will do everything possible to support members in addressing those issues during the seventy-first session.

In summary, during the seventy-first session I am committed to a universal push for the implementation of all 17 SDGs. I will push for a United Nations development system that works seamlessly as one and that responds effectively to the needs of Member States for which United Nations support is essential.

In response to the crisis our beloved ocean is facing, I will oversee the preparations for the United Nations conference on SDG 14, on oceans, to be held here in the Hall and in the surrounding conference rooms from 5 to 9 June 2017. We are building the conference to be the game-changer for the way we safeguard our ocean's well-being, and I hope to see as many members attend as possible.

Beyond the 2030 Agenda, as President of the General Assembly, I am fully conscious of the responsibilities, functions and powers of this organ under Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations. Next week, I will travel to Colombia for the historic signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — a welcome agreement ending decades of civil conflict.

It is my hope that, in collaboration with Member States and the wider United Nations community, it will also prove possible over the coming months to take steps to advance other pressing agendas before the Organization: to strengthen the United Nations peace

and security pillar by enhancing the Organization's ability to prevent and respond to conflicts and threats; to advance the sustaining peace agenda as fundamental to the United Nations engagement across peace and security, development and human rights — there can be, after all, no sustainable development without sustainable peace; to combat discrimination and to further the realization of human rights so that all people are able to live free and equal in dignity and rights; to strengthen the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture and to protect the lives of the vulnerable and those most at risk of such mass violations; to strive for greater consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation; and to work towards transforming the United Nations itself by addressing the need for gender equality and parity, better geographical balance, encouraging practices that are flexible, innovative and coherent and making the Organization more effective, efficient, accountable and fit for purpose.

I take this opportunity to salute from this high rostrum the thousands of United Nations peacekeepers serving around the world, and to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the high ideals of this institution. Blessed are the peacemakers.

As President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, I am fully committed to building on the standards of transparency and inclusiveness set by my predecessor. That will be particularly so for the process by which the new Secretary-General is appointed. Thereafter, our work will be to support a smooth transition and a strong start for the next Secretary-General. I will ensure that there are ample opportunities for early interaction between the new Secretary-General and Member States so as to build a solid working relationship with the Assembly.

During the seventy-first session, I will also seek to improve our ways of working in the General Assembly. I will look to address the effectiveness of Assembly committees to improve the coherence between the major organs, to enhance synergies and coherence of the agenda in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals and to tackle long-standing issues that are holding back the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization and embed greater transparency and ethics into all we do.

Of course, one area in particular need of attention is Security Council reform. We must have a Security Council that is structured to be able to meet the new and emerging challenges of the twenty-first century. That includes tackling the security dimensions resulting from climate change. During the seventy-first session, we must work with each other across and between traditional groups to build trust and flexibility so that we can achieve reform that is for the common good.

In conclusion, we have an expression in the Fijian language that exhorts us to look ahead and not to dwell on the grievances, the stalemates and the mistakes of the past. Today, I have touched on some of the great challenges that lie ahead for humankind. Let us prepare ourselves for them. It has been said that a politician thinks of the next election but that a statesperson thinks of the next generation. Like never before, we must look to the statesmen and stateswomen among us to guide us to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to deliver the secure and harmonious future that all of us wish for our children, grandchildren and for those who come after them.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker for this morning, I would like to remind members that the list of speakers for the general debate has been established on the agreed basis that statements should be no longer than 15 minutes, to enable all the speakers to be heard at a given meeting. Within this time frame, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation in the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly.

I would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at previous sessions, namely, that the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered is strongly discouraged. In that connection, after delivering their statements, speakers are invited to exit the General Assembly Hall through Room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to proceed in the same manner during the general debate of the seventy-first session?

It was so decided.

The President: Finally, I should like to draw to the attention of members that during the general debate official photographs of all the speakers are taken by the Department of Public Information. Members interested in obtaining those photographs are requested to contact the Photo Library of the United Nations.

Address by Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Temer (*spoke in Portuguese*): Brazil brings its natural spirit of openness to the United Nations and to the world. We are a country that is built on and by the strength of diversity. We believe in the power of dialogue. We strongly advocate the principles that govern the Organization — principles that are needed now more than ever before. Today's world shows signs of uncertainty and instability.

The international system is currently experiencing what could be described as an order deficit. Reality has moved ahead faster than our collective ability to address it. From outbreaks of regional conflicts to violent fundamentalism, we face both old and new threats that we have been unable to contain. In view of the refugee crisis and the upsurge in terrorism, we cannot help but be overwhelmed by a sentiment of perplexity or bewilderment. Hotbeds of tension show no signs of fading away. A state of virtual political inaction leads to prolonged wars with no solution. The system's inability to react to conflicts further worsens cycles of destruction. The social vulnerability of so many in several countries is exploited by narratives of fear and entrenchment.

There has been a return to xenophobia, and extreme forms of nationalism are gaining ground. Different expressions of demagoguery bring about serious risks on all continents. Even in the economic arena, the fact is that today's world lacks standards that can otherwise reduce globalization's asymmetries. Many have yielded to the easy answer of protectionism. We cannot possibly shy away from such a world. On the contrary, we must join hands and unite to transform it through diplomacy — balanced but firm diplomacy, sobering but determined. Such diplomacy should be well-grounded and embracing of change. That is how Brazil has conducted diplomacy both within our region and beyond as a country that has pursued its interests without ever relinquishing its principles.

What we wish for the world is what we wish for Brazil — peace, sustainable development and respect for human rights. Those are the values and aspirations of our society. Those are the values and aspirations that guide us on the international stage. We would like to live in a world in which law prevails over force. We would like to have rules that reflect the pluralistic nature of the community of nations. We would like to have a results-oriented United Nations, capable of facing up to the major challenges of our time. Our debates and negotiations cannot possibly be confined to the Organization's rooms and halls. Instead, they should reverberate through the markets of Kabul, the streets of Paris and the ruins of Aleppo.

The United Nations cannot be reduced to a mere observation post that condemns the world's scourges. Instead, the Organization should assert itself as a source of effective solutions. Those who sowed the seeds of conflict have reinvented themselves, but multilateral institutions have not. It is for that reason that Brazil has warned that it is essential to make global governance structures more representative, many of which have by now aged and have become disconnected from reality. The Security Council must be reformed. We stand ready to overcome the current impasse surrounding that issue.

Many challenges go beyond national borders, including trafficking in drugs and weapons, and have an impact on our cities, schools and families. Fighting organized crime requires us to work hand in hand. The very safety of our citizens ultimately depends on the quality of our collective action. An example of this is the war in Syria, which continues to engender unacceptable suffering, with women and children as the main victims. A political solution can no longer be postponed. We call on the parties involved in the conflict to respect the agreements endorsed by the Security Council and to guarantee the civilian population access to humanitarian aid.

We are also concerned by the lack of prospects for peace between Israel and Palestine. Brazil continues to support a solution based on two States living in peaceful coexistence within mutually agreed and internationally

recognized borders. It is our common responsibility to give new impetus to the negotiating process.

Another reason for concern, if I may say so, is the lack of progress on the nuclear disarmament agenda. There are thousands of nuclear weapons in the world today. That amounts to thousands of threats to international peace and security. The most recent nuclear test in the Korean peninsula is a reminder of the danger that nuclear proliferation poses. Brazil can speak with the authority of a country where the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes is an obligation enshrined in the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Yet not all news is bad. There are well-known examples, which have already been mentioned in today's meeting, of what can be accomplished through dialogue. We celebrate that diplomacy has prevailed on the Iranian nuclear dossier and encourage full compliance and understanding with the agreements reached. The peace accord between the Colombian government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia allows us to envisage the end of the last armed conflict on our continent. I congratulate President Juan Manuel Santos and all Colombians for that achievement. Brazil stands ready to contribute to peace in Colombia. The re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America shows that there are no eternal antagonisms or unbreakable deadlocks. We hope that closer ties will bring progress to the region as a whole, to include the economic and trade arenas. We hope that the re–establishment of relations between Cuba and the United State will be followed by the end of the economic embargo against Cuba.

This year, Brazil and Argentina celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. The Agency is the world's only binational organization responsible for applying nuclear safeguards. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stated, the Agency is an inspiration for regional and global efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Confidence-building between Brazilians and Argentines in the nuclear arena, as I have just indicated, is part of the inception of our integration experience, and of the foundation of projects like the Southern Common Market. For Brazil, Latin American integration is not only Government policy but the expression of a constitutional principle and a permanent foreign policy priority.

As we are all aware, Governments of different political inclinations coexist in our region. That is natural and sound. What is essential is that there be mutual respect and that we agree on basic common objectives, such as economic growth, human rights, social progress, security and freedom for all citizens. Those are the objectives that guide and inform the presence of the United Nations in Haiti. Since 2004, Brazil has led the military component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and has sent more than 33,000 contingents to that Caribbean country. We trust that the United Nations presence on the ground in Haiti will focus more on developing institutions and capacity-building.

Brazil's neighbours also include our brothers and sisters from Africa, to whom we are tied by the Atlantic Ocean and by a long-standing history. This year, we will host the Summit of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. Of the Community's nine members, six are African States. Brazil therefore looks towards Africa with friendship and respect, with a determination to undertake projects that will unite us even more.

Development is more than just an objective, it is an imperative. A developed society is one where all are entitled to high-quality public services such as education, health care, transportation and security; one where equal opportunity is assured and where access to decent work opportunities is not a privilege for a few. In a nutshell, development is paramount to dignity, and the dignity of humankind is one of the principles of the Brazilian State, as laid down in article 1 of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the greatest United Nations endeavour in favour of development. Turning it into reality will require more than the sum of national efforts. Supporting developing countries will be crucial to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Prosperity and well-being today should not impair the future of humankind. Economic growth should be socially balanced and environmentally friendly. After all, we live on the same Planet. There is no plan B. We must therefore take ambitious measures under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Tomorrow, I will formally deposit Brazil's instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change. As the world's most biodiverse country, and with one of the world's cleanest energy mixes, Brazil is an environmental

powerhouse with an uncompromising commitment to the environment.

Development also depends on trade. In periods of economic crisis, protectionism often increases. It must be curbed. Protectionism is a perverse barrier to development. It reduces the number of jobs and opportunities and makes men, women and families around the world, including in Brazil, fall victim to unemployment and hopelessness. The multilateral trading system is part of the fight against that evil. Ending protectionism in agriculture is particularly important for development. We cannot keep backtracking on the implementation of World Trade Organization commitments on agriculture any longer. It is urgent to prevent sanitary and phytosanitary measures from serving protectionist purposes. It is urgent to discipline subsidies and other distortive domestic support policies in the agricultural sector. Home to a modern, diversified and competitive agriculture, Brazil contributes to food security. We produce for ourselves and we help to feed the world.

Unfortunately, the full enjoyment of human rights remains an unaccomplished aspiration in today's world. Every human being has the right to live freely, according to one's own beliefs and convictions. Such fundamental liberty, however, is disrespected every day. Persecutions, political detentions and other arbitrary acts remain recurrent in many areas of the world. Our eyes should also turn to minorities and other more vulnerable segments of our society. That is what we have done in Brazil through income-transfer initiatives and housing and education programmes, including financial aid available to students from poor families and backgrounds. We have also advocated gender equality as expressly envisaged in our Constitution. It is incumbent upon us to safeguard the rights of all.

Refugees and migrants are, more often than not, victims of human rights violations, poverty, war and political repression. Yesterday's high-level meeting cast light on some of those substantive matters. Brazil is the product of immigrants, men and women from all continents. We repudiate all forms of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. We provide shelter to refugees and migrants, as I underscored in yesterday's meeting (see A/71/PV.4B).

In a world still plagued by hatred and sectarianism, the Rio de Janeiro Olympic and Paralympic games showed that it was possible for nations to come together in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. In fact, for the first time, a delegation of refugees was able to compete in the games. Therefore, through sports, we can succeed in promoting peace, fighting exclusion and tackling prejudice.

Finally, I bring to the United Nations a message of uncompromising commitment to democracy. Brazil has just undergone a long and complex process, led by our national congress and supreme court, which ultimately led to an impeachment. I must stress that everything unfolded in full compliance with constitutional order. We offer that example as a clear indication that there can be no democracy without the rule of law with standards that apply equally to all, even the most powerful. That is what Brazil is showing the world through the process of cleansing its own political system.

We have an independent judiciary, an active public prosecutor's office and executive and legislative bodies that fulfil their duties. Individual agendas do not prevail but rather the will of institutions, under the careful oversight of a pluralistic society and a genuinely free press. Our task now consists in resuming economic growth and ensuring that Brazilian workers regain the millions of lost jobs. We are clear on the path to be followed. It is the path of fiscal and social responsibility. Trust has already been restored and a more prosperous horizon lies ahead in the near future. Our development process consists primarily of investment, trade, science, and technology partnerships. In that regard, our relations with countries of all continents will prove decisive.

I do not wish to close my remarks without addressing the Secretary-General, who will soon be leaving office. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as we all know, has devoted the last 10 years of his life to a tireless pursuit of peace, development and human rights. He can be sure that we are highly appreciative and thankful for his efforts.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, we can no longer doubt that our problems are global. There is no place for isolationism. Ours is a common destiny. At the United Nations, more than anywhere else, we can come close to the universalist ideal that drives us all. About sixty years ago, my fellow countryman, Oswaldo Aranha, stated from this rostrum that even in a world as disturbed as it was then, no one wished to see the doors of the United Nations close. He warned us all that without the United Nations, the shadows of war would descend upon humankind to relentlessly

and indefinitely eclipse the hope of so many men and women. It is in the Assembly of nations that we nurture our hope, a hope achieved through dialogue, mutual understanding and respect for others, ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Deby Itno (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji, who has been elected President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. We wish him every success in discharging his mandate. Chad pledges its full support.

I would also like to congratulate and thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, outgoing President of the General Assembly, for his dedication and his many initiatives to strengthen the role of the Assembly, the most democratic and representative entity of the United Nations.

At the same time, on behalf of Chad and the African Union, I would like to congratulate and render a heartfelt tribute to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whose mandate will soon come to a close. His leadership, commitment and unflagging dedication during the past 10 years have contributed to buttressing the role of the United Nations and promoting its ideals.

Founded over 70 years ago by 51 Member States, the United Nations today now consists of 193 Member States. The evolution of humankind has made our States increasingly interdependent and interconnected, just as the challenges have become global and collective in nature. The world in which we live is facing multidimensional threats which prompt great concern.

Armed conflict, terrorism, climate change, mass migration, underdevelopment, poverty, and political, economic and financial crises have reached unprecedented proportions. No continent or region of the world has been spared by at least one of those scourges. Citizens of the world from all walks of life in some cases live in a perpetual state of fear and in others in a state of despair because wars, indiscriminate violence, poverty and the adverse effects of climate change are on the rise and there is slim hope of solving those problems.

The growing number of refugees and displaced persons throughout the world; the ongoing shipwrecks of makeshift boats in the Mediterranean, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives; and the Syrian tragedy, which has been unfolding before our eyes for more than five years, among other challenges, are tangible events that eloquently illustrate our collective powerlessness.

In this world of uncertainty, Africa is the most vulnerable and exposed continent. The victim of colonial plunder and affected by the numerous problems caused by underdevelopment, Africa is today under full attack from terrorism — the greatest threat of the century. Somalia, Libya, Mali, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel in general are seriously destabilized and the danger is threatening to spread throughout the entire continent. Despite their modest means, the African Union and its member States are highly mobilized and committed to fighting this absolute evil.

That is evidenced by the great sacrifices that the African Union Mission in Somalia has made since 2004, the implementation of the Multinational Joint Task Force by States of the Lake Chad basin and Benin to fight the Boko Haram terrorist group, and the establishment of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which is a framework for security cooperation and countering all cross-border threats in the countries of the Sahel. This impetus for mobilization should be strengthened and supported by the entire international community by all means available, including physical, financial and military, as well as through intelligence-sharing. In that regard, from this rostrum I appeal to all States Members of the United Nations, particularly Africa's partners, to contribute to the African Fund Against

Terrorism created by the African Union at its Summit, held in Kigali in July.

Africa is also working with great diligence to manage the crises and conflicts besetting it by promoting a regional approach to crisis resolution, underpinned by a peace and security architecture. Such an approach, which is deserving of the firm support of the international community, seeks to strengthen the response capacity of regional and subregional organizations in the light of their geographical proximity, knowledge of the terrain and their rapid and flexible deployment capabilities. The African Union Mission in the Sudan, the African Union Mission in Somalia, the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic are concrete examples of the efforts of the African Union.

The complexity of conflicts throughout the world, including in Africa, is such that no organization can resolve them alone. That is why the African Union has always advocated a strategic partnership with the United Nations to confront security challenges on the continent. The African Union has deployed all of the aforementioned operations on behalf of the international community and in deference to the purview of the Security Council. Consequently, the African Union can legitimately count on the multifaceted and financial support of the United Nations.

We welcome the fact that this long-held position of the African Union is endorsed in the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations in its 2015 report (see A/70/95), which has been unanimously praised. Accordingly, in the spirit of shared responsibility, at its latest summit the African Union adopted a measure to shoulder 25 per cent of the cost of peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council on the continent. The African Union hopes to receive the remaining 75 per cent from the United Nations peacekeeping budget, in keeping with the spirit of the division of labour and cost-sharing. The African Union anxiously awaits the start of constructive discussions with the United Nations on this proposal in order to reach an agreement that could further strengthen the exemplary partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the interests of peace and the protection of civilians in times of crisis.

The political and security situation in many African countries concerns us deeply. Mali remains a target of attacks by terrorist groups despite the presence of United Nations forces on the ground and the peace agreements reached following arduous negotiations in Algiers. The international community must undertake an in-depth analysis of the situation with a view to ending the conflict through dialogue, without losing sight of tailored and appropriate responses to the terrorist threat.

The situations in Libya and South Sudan remains extremely troubling and requires a more substantial mobilization on the part of the international community, with the vigorous engagement and coordination of the respective regional organizations involved in resolving the crises. In that respect, the joint effort of the African Union and the United Nations to deploy a civilian protection force of 4,000 men, in addition to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, is to be commended. We also call for more concerted efforts between the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for the Sudan and South Sudan and the United Nations to persuade the non-signatories of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur to commit to it.

Despite the successful holding of presidential and legislative elections, the situation in the Central African Republic remains fragile, as evidenced by the latest clashes between armed groups within the country. That situation requires a long-term follow-up, and the newly elected Central African authorities must be further supported in their efforts to normalize the situation in their country. I call on the international community to maintain and strengthen its support for peacebuilding and national reconciliation there. We also urge the political actors in brotherly countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Gabon, to prioritize dialogue and cooperation with regard to pre- and post-electoral crises. The African Union is ready to assist them in settling their disputes through peaceful means.

The serious crises affecting Iraq, Syria and Yemen call on our collective conscience concerning the many who have been killed, wounded, displaced or made refugees, as well as to the destruction of their vital infrastructure. The international community must urgently find a political solution to all of these crises through direct negotiations between the parties in conflict.

Concerning the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, we call for a definitive, just and equitable solution that guarantees security for Israel and an independent and viable State for Palestinians, urging both parties to resume dialogue and relaunch the peace process, and setting out a clear framework for future negotiations, along with a deadline, that will make it possible to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

Africa is not only a gigantic reservoir of raw materials; it is also home to more than 1 billion men and women who yearn for harmonious development accompanied by social well-being and prosperity. The international community can eradicate poverty in the world only if it upholds the commitments made within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which puts people at the very core of all concerns. The implementation of the Agenda must be an absolute priority in order to eliminate extreme poverty, fight climate change, strengthen resilience and promote sustainable economic growth that will benefit all.

In this respect, we stress the urgent need for an effective mobilization of the resources necessary to finance development in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Africa is committed to playing its part by ensuring an effective coordination of efforts as well as consistency among the goals of both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. No region of the world, no State can prosper alone or be surrounded by an ocean of destitution and poverty without experiencing the consequences.

The successive waves of young African migrants moving towards Europe that we see on a daily basis, thousands of whom have drowned, are a challenge to the conscience of the international community. Though we may erect barriers, build ghettos and mobilize naval forces to contain migrants, the phenomenon will not stop until the regions concerned are closely involved in a suitable collective response. The solutions outlined at the 2015 Valletta summit seem, unfortunately, to have fallen short of our expectations and of the challenges. It is not a matter of providing charity to Africa, but, rather, of establishing with it a true strategic partnership aimed at tackling common global challenges. It is not too late to begin collective and concerted action that takes on board the legitimate concerns of all the parties concerned.

One of the major challenges facing Africa is climate change and environmental issues. The advance of the desert, the silting up of the Niger river, the El Niño phenomenon in southern Africa and deforestation are all the most striking signs of climate change in Africa. Lake Chad has shrunk from 25,000 square kilometres in 1960 to less than 2,000 today; this is additional proof of the degradation of our planet's climate. This ecological disaster, which is endangering coexistence among communities and dangerously threatening food security in the Sahel, will certainly have consequences for the security and the stability of the region, as we see from the strong presence and the accelerated development of the terrorist threat.

The partnership with Africa must also be seen in the fight for the preservation of the environment, which is seriously threatened. In this respect, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, signed on 22 April by all States, creates new obligations and a structural framework for the long-term fight against climate change. There is a great deal left to do to in order to achieve tangible achievements in the implementation of the commitments undertaken by all parties according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

The Agreement will be credible only if it is accompanied by specific action aimed at bridging the enormous gap between the efforts that have been pledged and the noble objectives that are sought, including those established at Copenhagen, namely, mobilizing $100 billion by 2024 for the poorest countries.

The question of United Nations reform, and specifically that of the Security Council, remains a major concern for Africa, which, because of a historical injustice, remains marginalized in this organ. It is unfortunate that such reform, which the African Union has called for at every one of its summits for years, does not seem to prompt any interest. Nonetheless, Africa will continue to call for the creation of a more just and equitable universal Organization, while reaffirming its position on this matter as expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus.

Confidence and hope in the global solutions that the United Nations inspires will be well founded only if all nations, in their diversity, take part in their design and implementation. All of us, as in a marriage, must be faithful to humankind, for better and for worse.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Chad for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obama: As I address the General Assembly in this Hall as President for the final time, let me recount the progress that we have made these last eight years. From the depths of the greatest financial crisis of our time, we coordinated our response to avoid further catastrophe and return the global economy to growth. We have taken away terrorist safe havens, strengthened the non-proliferation regime and resolved the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomacy. We opened relations with Cuba, helped Colombia end Latin America's longest war, and we welcome a democratically elected leader of Myanmar to this Assembly. Our assistance is helping people feed themselves, care for the sick, power communities across Africa and promote models of development rather than dependence. We have made international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund more representative, while establishing a framework to protect our planet from the ravages of climate change.

This is important work. It has made a real difference in the lives of our people, and it could not have happened had we not worked together. Yet around the globe we are seeing the same forces of global integration that have made us interdependent also expose deep fault lines in the existing international order. We see it in the headlines every day. Around the world, refugees flow across borders in flight from brutal conflict. Financial disruptions continue to weigh upon our workers and entire communities. Across vast swaths of the Middle East, basic security and basic order have broken down. We see too many Governments muzzling journalists, quashing dissent and censoring the flow of information. Terrorist networks use social media to prey upon the minds of our youth, endangering open societies and spurring anger against innocent immigrants and Muslims. Powerful nations contest the constraints placed on them by international law.

This is the paradox that defines our world today. A quarter century after the end of the Cold War, the world is by many measures less violent and more prosperous than ever before, and yet our societies are filled with uncertainty, unease and strife. Despite enormous progress, as people lose trust in institutions, governing becomes more difficult and tensions between nations become more quick to surface.

I therefore believe that at this moment we all face a choice. We can choose to press forward with a better model of cooperation and integration, or we can retreat into a world sharply divided, and ultimately in conflict, along age-old lines of nation, tribe, race or religion. I want to suggest today that we must go forward and not backward. I believe that as imperfect as they are, the principles of open markets, accountable governance, democracy, human rights and international law that we have forged remain the firmest foundation for human progress in this century. I make this argument not based on theory or ideology, but on facts — facts that all too often we forget in the immediacy of current events.

This is the most important fact: the integration of our global economy has made life better for billions of men, women and children. Over the last 25 years, the number of people living in extreme poverty has been cut from nearly 40 per cent of humanity to under 10 per cent. That is unprecedented, and it is not an abstraction. It means children have enough to eat; mothers do not die in childbirth.

Meanwhile, cracking the genetic code promises to cure diseases that have plagued us for centuries. The Internet can deliver the entirety of human knowledge to a young girl in a remote village on a single hand-held device. In medicine and manufacturing, in education and communications, we are experiencing a transformation of how human beings live on a scale that recalls the revolutions in agriculture and industry. As a result, a person born today is more likely to be

healthy, live longer and have access to opportunity than at any time in human history. Moreover, the collapse of colonialism and communism has allowed more people than ever before to live with the freedom to choose their leaders. Despite the real and troubling areas where freedom appears to be in retreat, the fact remains that the number of democracies around the world has nearly doubled in the last 25 years.

In remote corners of the world, citizens are demanding respect for the dignity of all people no matter their gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation, and those who deny others dignity are subject to public reproach. An explosion of social media has given ordinary people more ways to express themselves and has raised people's expectations for those of us in power. Indeed, our international order has been so successful that we take it as a given that great Powers no longer fight world wars, that the end of the Cold War lifted the shadow of nuclear Armageddon, that the battlefields of Europe have been replaced by peaceful union and that China and India remain on a path of remarkable growth.

I say all this not to whitewash the challenges we face or to suggest complacency. Rather, I believe that we need to acknowledge these achievements in order to summon the confidence to carry this progress forward and to make sure that we do not abandon those very things that have delivered this progress. In order to move forward, however, we do have to acknowledge that the existing path to global integration requires a course correction. All too often, those trumpeting the benefits of globalization have ignored inequality within and among nations, have ignored the enduring appeal of ethnic and sectarian identities, and have left international institutions ill-equipped, underfunded and underresourced for handling transnational challenges.

As these real problems have been neglected, alternative visions of the world have pressed forward both in the wealthiest countries and in the poorest: religious fundamentalism, the politics of ethnicity or tribe or sect, aggressive nationalism, a crude populism — sometimes from the far left, but more often from the far right — which seeks to restore what they believe was a better, simpler age free of outside contamination.

We cannot dismiss these visions. They are powerful. They reflect dissatisfaction among too many of our citizens. I do not believe those visions can deliver security or prosperity over the long term, but I do believe that these visions fail to recognize, at a very basic level, our common humanity. Moreover, I believe that the acceleration of travel, technology and telecommunications — together with a global economy that depends on a global supply chain — makes it ultimately self-defeating for those who seek to reverse this progress. Today, a nation ringed by walls would only imprison itself.

The answer cannot be a simple rejection of global integration. Instead, we must work together to make sure that the benefits of such integration are broadly shared and that the economic, political and cultural disruptions that are caused by integration are squarely addressed. This is not the place for a detailed policy blueprint, but let me offer in broad strokes those areas where I believe we must do better together.

It starts with making the global economy work better for all people and not just for those at the top. While open markets and capitalism have raised standards of living around the globe, globalization, combined with rapid progress in technology, has also weakened the position of workers and their ability to secure a decent wage. In advanced economies like my own, unions have been undermined and many manufacturing jobs have disappeared. Often, those who benefit most from globalization have used their political power to further undermine the position of workers.

In developing countries, labour organizations have often been suppressed, and the growth of the middle class has been held back by corruption and underinvestment. Mercantilist policies pursued by Governments with export-driven models threaten to undermine the consensus that underpins global trade. Meanwhile, global capital is too often unaccountable — nearly $8 trillion stashed away in tax havens, the shadow banking system that grows beyond the reach of effective oversight.

A world in which 1 per cent of humankind controls as much wealth as the other 99 per cent will never be stable. I understand that the gaps between rich and poor are not new, but just as the child in a slum today can see the skyscraper nearby, technology now allows any person with a smartphone to see how the most privileged among us live and the contrast between their own lives and others'. Expectations rise then — faster than Governments can deliver — and a pervasive sense of injustice undermines people's faith in the system.

So how do we fix this imbalance? We cannot unwind immigration any more than we can stuff technology back into a box. Nor can we look to failed models of the past. If we start resorting to trade wars, market-distorting subsidies, beggar-thy-neighbour policies and overreliance on natural resources instead of innovation, these approaches will make us poor collectively, and they are more likely to lead to conflict. The stark contrast between, say, the success of the Republic of Korea and the wasteland of North Korea shows that the central planned control of the economy is a dead end.

But I do believe there is another path, one that fuels growth and innovation and offers the clearest route to individual opportunity and national success. It does not require succumbing to a soulless capitalism that benefits only the few, but rather recognizes that economies are more successful when we close the gap between rich and poor and growth is broadly based. That means respecting the rights of workers so that they can organize into independent unions and earn a living wage. It means investing in our people, their skills, their education, their capacity to take an idea and turn it into a business. It means strengthening the safety net that protects our people from hardship and allows them to take more risks to look for a new job or start a new venture.

These are the policies that I pursued here in the United States and with clear results. American businesses have now created 15 million new jobs. After the recession, the top 1 per cent of Americans were capturing more than 90 per cent of income growth, but today that is down to roughly half. Last year, poverty in this country fell at the fastest rate in nearly 50 years. With further investment in infrastructure and early childhood education and basic research, I am confident that such progress will continue.

So just as I pursued these measures here at home, so the United States has worked with many nations to curb the excesses of capitalism, not to punish wealth, but to prevent repeated crises that can destroy it. That is why we have worked with other nations to create higher and clearer standards for banking and taxation, because a society that asks less of oligarchs than of ordinary citizens will rot from within.

That is why we have pushed for transparency and cooperation in rooting out corruption and tracking illicit dollars, because markets create more jobs when they are fuelled by hard work and not the capacity to extort and bribe. That is why we have worked to reach trade agreements that raise labour standards and raise environmental standards, as we have done with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, so that the benefits are more broadly shared.

Just as we benefit by combating inequality within our countries, so I believe advanced economies still need to do more to close the gap between rich and poor nations around the globe. This is difficult politically. It is difficult to spend on foreign assistance, but I do not believe this is charity. For a small fraction of what we spent on the war in Iraq, we could support institutions so that fragile States do not collapse in the first place and invest in emerging economies that become markets for our goods. It is not just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do.

That is why we need to follow through on our efforts to combat climate change. If we do not act boldly, the bill that could come due will be mass migrations, cities submerged, nations displaced, food supplies decimated and conflicts borne of despair. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change gives us a framework to act, but only if we scale up our ambitions. There must be a sense of urgency about bringing the Agreement into force and helping poorer countries leapfrog destructive forms of energy.

For the wealthiest countries, therefore, a green climate fund should be just the beginning. We need to invest in research and provide market incentives to develop new technologies and then make those technologies accessible and affordable for poor countries. Only then can we continue lifting all people up from poverty without condemning our children to a planet beyond their capacity to repair it.

We therefore need new models for the global marketplace, models that are inclusive and sustainable. In the same way, we need models of governance that are inclusive and accountable to ordinary people. I recognize that not every country in this Hall is going to follow the same model of governance. I do not think that America can or should impose our system of government on other countries, but there appears to be a growing contest between authoritarianism and liberalism right now. I want everybody to understand, I am not neutral in that contest. I believe in a liberal political order, an order built not just through elections and representative government, but also through respect for human rights

and civil society and independent judiciaries and the rule of law.

I know that some countries that now recognize the power of free markets still reject the model of free societies. Perhaps those of us who have been promoting democracy feel somewhat discouraged since the end of the cold war, because we have learned that liberal democracy will not just wash across the globe in a single wave. It turns out that building accountable institutions is hard work, the work of generations. The gains are often fragile. Sometimes we take one step forward and then two steps back. In countries held together by borders drawn by colonial Powers, with ethnic enclaves and tribal divisions, politics and elections can sometimes appear to be a zero-sum game.

So, given the difficulty in forging true democracy in the face of these pressures, it is no surprise that some argue that the future favours the strong man, a top-down model, rather than strong democratic institutions. But I believe this thinking is wrong. I believe that the road of true democracy remains the better path. I believe that, in the twenty-first century, economies can only grow to a certain point until they need to open up, because entrepreneurs need to access information in order to invent, young people need a global education in order to thrive, independent media needs to check the abuses of power. Without this evolution, the expectations of people will ultimately not be met. Suppression and stagnation will set in. And history shows that strong men are then left with two paths: permanent crackdown, which sparks strife at home, or scapegoating enemies abroad, which can lead to war.

I will admit that my belief that Governments should serve the individual and not the other way around is shaped by America's story. Our nation began with the promise of freedom that applied only to the few, but because of our democratic Constitution, because of our Bill of Rights, because of our ideals, ordinary people were able to organize and march and protest. And ultimately those ideals won out and opened doors for women, minorities and workers in ways that made our economy more productive and turned our diversity into a strength. It gave innovators the chance to transform every area of human endeavour. It made it possible for someone like me to be elected President of the United States.

So, yes, my views are shaped by the specific experiences of America, but I do not think this story is unique to America. Look at the transformation that has taken place in countries as different as Japan, Chile, Indonesia and Botswana. The countries that have succeeded are ones in which people feel they have a stake. In Europe, the progress of those countries in the former Soviet bloc that embraced democracy stand in clear contrast to those that did not. After all, the people of Ukraine did not take to the streets because of some plot imposed from abroad. They took to the streets because their leadership was for sale and they had no recourse. They demanded change because they saw life get better for the people in the Baltics and in Poland, societies that were more liberal and democratic and open than their own.

So those of us who believe in democracy need to speak out forcefully because both the facts and history, I believe, are on our side. That does not mean that democracies are not without flaws. It does mean that the cure for what ails our democracies is greater engagement by our citizens, not less. Yes, in America, there is too much money in politics, too much entrenched partisanship, too little participation by citizens, in part because of a patchwork of laws that makes it harder to vote.

In Europe, a well-intentioned Brussels often became too isolated from the normal push-and-pull of national politics. Too often in capitals decision-makers have forgotten that democracy needs to be driven by civic engagement from the bottom up, not governance by experts from the top down. So these are real problems. As leaders of democratic Governments make the case for democracy abroad, we had better strive harder to set a better example at home.

Moreover, every country will organize its Government informed by centuries of history, the circumstances of geography and the deeply held beliefs of its people. So I recognize that a traditional society may value unity and cohesion more than a diverse country like my own, which was founded upon what at the time was a radical idea, the idea of the liberty of individual human beings endowed with certain God-given rights. But that does not mean that ordinary people in Asia or Africa or the Middle East somehow prefer arbitrary rule that denies them a voice in the decisions that can shape their lives. I believe that spirit is universal. If anyone doubts the universality of that desire, listen to the voices of young people everywhere who call out for freedom and dignity and the opportunity to control their own lives.

This leads me to the third thing we need to do. We must reject any forms of fundamentalism or racism or belief in ethnic superiority that makes our traditional identities irreconcilable with modernity. Instead, we need to embrace the tolerance that results from respect for all human beings. It is a truism that global integration has led to a collision of cultures. Trade, migration, the Internet — all these things can challenge and unsettle our most cherished identities. We see liberal societies express opposition when women choose to cover themselves. We see protests responding to Western newspaper cartoons that caricature the Prophet Mohammed.

In a world that left the age of empire behind, we see Russia attempting to recover lost glory through force. Asian powers debate competing claims of history. And in Europe and the United States, we see people wrestle with concerns about immigration and changing demographics, suggesting that somehow people who look different are corrupting the character of our countries. There is no easy answer for resolving all these social forces, and we must respect the meaning that people draw from their own traditions, from their religion, from their ethnicity, from their sense of nationhood. But I do not believe progress is possible if our desire to preserve our identities gives way to an impulse to dehumanize or dominate another group.

If our religion leads us to persecute those of another faith, if we jail or beat people who are gay, if our traditions lead us to prevent girls from going to school, if we discriminate on the basis of race, tribe or ethnicity, then the fragile bonds of civilization will fray. The world is too small. We are too packed together for us to be able to resort to those old ways of thinking.

We see this mindset in too many parts of the Middle East. So much of the collapse in order there has been fuelled because leaders sought legitimacy, not because of policies or programmes, but by resorting to persecuting political opposition, or demonizing other religious sects, by narrowing the public space to the mosque, where in too many places perversions of a great faith were tolerated. And these forces built up for years. They are now at work helping to fuel both Syria's tragic civil war and the mindless medieval menace of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The mindset of sectarianism, extremism, blood-letting and retribution that has been taking place will not be quickly reversed.

If we are honest, we will understand that no external power is going to be able to force different religious communities or ethnic communities to coexist for long. But I do believe we have to be honest about the nature of these conflicts. Our international community must continue to work with those who seek to build rather than to destroy. And there is a military component to that, which means being united and relentless in destroying networks like ISIL, which show no respect for human life. But it also means that in a place like Syria, where there is no ultimate military victory to be won, we are going to have to pursue the hard work of diplomacy that aims to stop the violence, deliver aid to those in need, and support those who pursue a political settlement and can see those who are not like themselves as worthy of dignity and respect.

Across the region's conflicts, we have to insist that all parties recognize a common humanity and that nations end proxy wars that fuel disorder, because until basic questions are answered about how communities coexist, the embers of extremism will continue to burn, countless human beings will suffer — most of all in that region — and extremism will continue to be exported overseas. And the world is too small for us to simply be able to build a wall and prevent it from affecting our own societies.

And what is true in the Middle East is true for all of us. Surely religious traditions can be honoured and upheld while teaching young people science and math, rather than intolerance. Surely we can sustain our unique traditions while giving women their full and rightful role in the politics and economics of a nation. Surely we can rally our nations to solidarity while recognizing equal treatment for all communities — whether it is a religious minority in Myanmar or an ethnic minority in Burundi or a racial minority right here in the United States. And surely, Israelis and Palestinians will be better off if Palestinians reject incitement and recognize the legitimacy of Israel, and Israel recognizes that it cannot permanently occupy and settle Palestinian land. We all have to do better as leaders in tamping down, rather than encouraging, a notion of identity that leads us to diminish others.

And this leads me to the fourth and final thing we need to do, and that is sustain our commitment to international cooperation rooted in the rights and responsibilities of nations. As President of the United States, I know that for most of human history, power has not been unipolar. The end of the Cold War may

have led too many to forget this truth. I have noticed as President that, at times, both America's adversaries and some of our allies believe that all problems were either caused by Washington or could be solved by Washington, and perhaps too many in Washington believed that as well.

But I believe that America has been a rare super-Power in human history insofar as it has been willing to think beyond narrow self-interest, that while we have made our share of mistakes over these last 25 years – and I have acknowledged some – we have strived, sometimes at great sacrifice, to align better our actions with our ideals. And as a consequence, I believe we have been a force for good.

We have secured allies. We have acted to protect the vulnerable. We have supported human rights and welcomed scrutiny of our own actions. We have bound our power to international laws and institutions. When we have made mistakes, we have tried to acknowledge them. We have worked to roll back poverty, hunger and disease beyond our borders, not just within our borders.

I am proud of that. But I also know that we cannot do this alone. And I believe that if we are to meet the challenges of this century, we are all going to have to do more to build up international capacity. We cannot escape the prospect of nuclear war unless we all commit to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and pursuing a world without them. When Iran agrees to accept constraints on its nuclear programme, that enhances global security and enhances Iran's ability to work with other nations. On the other hand, when North Korea tests a bomb that endangers all of us. And any country that breaks this basic bargain must face consequences. And those nations with these weapons, like the United States, have a unique responsibility to pursue the path of reducing our stockpiles and reaffirming basic norms, like the commitment to never test them again.

We cannot combat a disease like zika that recognizes no borders – mosquitos do not respect walls – unless we make permanent the same urgency that we brought to bear against Ebola – by strengthening our own systems of public health, by investing in cures, rolling back the root causes of disease and helping poorer countries develop their public health infrastructures.

We can only eliminate extreme poverty if the Sustainable Development Goals that we have set are more than words on paper. Human ingenuity now gives us the capacity to feed the hungry and give all of our children – including our girls – the education that is the foundation for opportunity in our world. But we have to put our money where our mouths are. And we can only realize the promise of this institution's founding – to replace the ravages of war with cooperation – if powerful nations like my own accept constraints. Sometimes I am criticized in my own country for professing a belief in international norms and multilateral institutions. But I am convinced that in the long run, giving up some freedom of action – not giving up our ability to protect ourselves or pursue our core interests, but binding ourselves to international rules over the long term – enhances our security. And I think that is not true just for us.

If Russia continues to interfere in the affairs of its neighbours, it may be popular at home and it may fuel nationalist fervour for a time, but over time it is also going to diminish its stature and make its borders less secure. In the South China Sea, a peaceful resolution of disputes offered by law will mean far greater stability than the militarization of a few rocks and reefs.

We are all stakeholders in this international system, and it calls upon all of us to invest in the success of institutions to which we belong. And the good news is that many nations have shown what kind of progress is possible when we make those commitments. Consider what we have accomplished at the United Nations over the past few years. Together, we mobilized some 50,000 additional troops for United Nations peacekeeping, making them nimble, better equipped, better prepared to deal with emergencies. Together we established an Open Government Partnership so that, increasingly, transparency empowers more and more people around the globe. And together, now, we have to open our hearts and do more to help refugees who are desperate for a home.

We should all welcome the pledges of increased assistance that have been made at this General Assembly gathering. I will be discussing that more this afternoon, but we have to follow through, even when the politics are hard, because, in the eyes of innocent men and women and children who, through no fault of their own, have had to flee everything that they know, everything that they love, we have to have the empathy to see ourselves. We have to imagine what it would be like for our family, for our children, if the unspeakable happened to us. And we should all understand that, ultimately, our world will be more secure if we are prepared to help those in need and the nations that are carrying the

largest burden with respect to accommodating these refugees.

There are a lot of nations right now that are doing the right thing, but many nations — particularly those blessed with wealth and the benefits of geography — that can do more to offer a hand, even if they also insist that refugees who come to our countries have to do more to adapt to the customs and conventions of the communities that are now providing them a home.

Let me conclude by saying that I recognize that history tells a different story than the one that I have talked about here today. There is a much darker and more cynical view of history that we can adopt. Human beings are too often motivated by greed and by power. Big countries for most of history have pushed smaller ones around. Tribes, ethnic groups and nation States have very often found it most convenient to define themselves by what they hate and not just those ideas that bind them together.

Time and again, human beings have believed that they finally arrived at a period of enlightenment only to then repeat cycles of conflict and suffering. Perhaps that is our fate. We have to remember that the choices of individual human beings led to repeated world war, but we also have to remember that the choices of individual human beings created the United Nations so that a war like that would never happen again. Each of us as leaders and each nation can choose to reject those who appeal to our worst impulses and embrace those who appeal to our best, for we have shown that we can choose a better history.

Sitting in a prison cell, a young Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote:

> "Human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God."

And during the course of these eight years, as I have travelled to many nations represented here, I have seen that spirit in our young people, who are more educated and more tolerant, more inclusive, more diverse and more creative than our generation; who are more empathetic and compassionate towards their fellow human beings than previous generations. And, yes, some of that comes with the idealism of youth, but it also comes with young people's access to information about other peoples and places — an understanding unique in human history that their future is bound with the fates of other human beings on the other side of the world.

I think of the thousands of health-care workers from around the world who volunteered to fight Ebola. I remember the young entrepreneurs I met who are now starting new businesses in Cuba, or the parliamentarians who used to be just a few years ago political prisoners in Myanmar. I think of the girls who have braved taunts or violence just to go to school in Afghanistan, and the university students who started programmes online to reject the extremism of organizations like ISIL. I draw strength from the young Americans — entrepreneurs, activists, soldiers, new citizens — who are remaking our nation once again, and who are unconstrained by old habits and old conventions and unencumbered by what is, but are instead ready to seize what ought to be.

My own family is made up of the flesh and blood and traditions and cultures and faiths from a lot of different parts of the world — just as America has been built by immigrants from every shore. And in my own life in this country, and as President, I have learned that our identities do not have to be defined by putting someone else down, but can be enhanced by lifting somebody else up. They do not have to be defined in opposition to others, but rather by a belief in liberty and equality and justice and fairness.

And the embrace of these principles as universal does not weaken my particular pride in or my particular love for America — it strengthens it. My belief that these ideals apply everywhere does not lessen my commitment to helping those who look like me, or pray as I do, or pledge allegiance to my flag. But my faith in those principles does force me to expand my moral imagination and to recognize that I can best serve my own people and I can best look after my own daughters by making sure that my actions seek what is right for all people and all children, and other people's daughters and sons.

This is what I believe — that all of us can be co-workers with God. And our leadership, and our Governments, and the United Nations should reflect this irreducible truth.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kiska: Many world leaders care more about retaining power than improving the lives of their people. Those words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon were recently addressed to us, the people in this Hall. We who are joined here are incredibly privileged. Our job enables us to be in touch with the most successful and the most miserable. We can meet individuals with remarkable destinies and also the poor whose daily routine is to fight for a piece of bread or a bottle of clean water to stay alive. Each of them trusts that we will be able to understand the scope of their problems. They hope that we will never set our personal interests over the needs of our people, our countries and our planet.

Last year's decision of the international community to transform the world for good — to leave no one behind — was a clear and ambitious way of how to address these needs. We are also perfectly aware of the nature of the challenges awaiting us to decarbonize the economy, to promote inclusive and sustainable development. But too many people tend to be pessimistic when it comes to setting grand global goals. Seemingly, there are more than enough reasons for their negativity, as we witness wars, terror and suffering. We see the damaging consequences some of our actions have on the planet and the people. And we can see them online, as new technologies bring us closer than ever to each other.

In the interconnected world of social networks, bad news travels especially fast. Sometimes it is accompanied by lies, propaganda and dangerous ideologies aimed at manipulating the public, spreading hate and frustration, and creating a fearful picture of the globalized world falling apart. Maybe that is one of the reasons why so many people are sceptical about the global development goals and our ability to deliver, and why we often forget that humankind has an impressive track record when it comes to making the world a better place. Global poverty has been halved in the past two decades. People fight fewer wars and commit fewer homicides. Many more men and women have access to health care and more girls attend schools than at any time in the past.

I am sure that we are more than capable of dealing with such challenges as poverty, hunger, diseases, injustice and discrimination. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have the best means in the history to make life on the planet as good as it gets. The success of the new Agenda will not be possible without efficient international cooperation and coordination, backed by United Nations institutions. Success will be not possible without us, the people in this Hall. At the same time, we should not forget about our very own homework — to win the hearts, minds and trust of our people.

The world has become smaller due to globalization and modern communication technologies. The problems our world faces have become more global and intertwined. Yet our social instincts have often remained local, and our sense of responsibility is often limited by our national borders. There is a real danger that many of us thought we would not see spreading again. It is the rise of nationalism, extremism, racism and intolerance in many parts of the world. I am certain that responsible leaders need to address those dark moods in our societies, because those moods are the ultimate enemy of humankind — the enemy responsible for the worst misery and bloodbath in our modern history.

One of our most obvious duties as political leaders is, without doubt, to provide for and preserve peace and development. We have established many useful institutions to progress in that effort. However, we are witnessing the largest crisis of displacement since the Second World War. There is no need for me to recall the worrying number of refugees. We hear those numbers so often that sometimes we forget that this is not a numbers game. As His Holiness Pope Francis reminds us, migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humankind. They are children, fathers and mothers — real men and women.

Every political misunderstanding and failure to find solutions leads to more people without a roof over their head, more families separated and more hungry children. It means greater temptation to set people against each other and arouse fear among them. We may have different starting positions, different experiences and even different points of view on the problem, but we all have to understand that refugees need our empathy and our help. I strongly and truly believe that it is a moral duty of every successful, modern country to help. It is a moral duty of any true political leader to think seriously about how to help those fleeing violence and death. Let us be honest here and again ask ourselves the question raised by the Secretary-General. Are we all doing enough to improve the lives of people in need, or are we more concerned about retaining our power? Are we here to serve or to be served?

Our commitment to a just and safe world is tested as we mourn with the families of the victims of terrorism, and as we struggle to wrap our minds around that source of human suffering. When a terrorist group enslaves, murders and takes hope from men, women and children, it is not a single nation's problem. It is an attack on our very core — on our humanity. It is an attempt to kill goodness in us. Terrorists do not care about dozens or hundreds of innocent victims. They target hundreds of millions of the hearts and minds of spectators around the world to cause them to fear and to hate, encourage hostility among nations and fulfil their sick vision of the clash of civilizations.

We need to stay strong in our societies and true to our core values and culture of mutual respect, peace and non-violence. We can see that it is not hard to make people fear. Sadly, it is not hard to make people hate. But we must not respond by judging people by the colour of their skin or their choice of worship. We need to halt the growing anger, prejudice and hostility towards different religions. True leadership brings hope, reinforces trust and offers sustainable solutions for safety and peaceful coexistence.

In the words of a well-known catchphrase, we should think globally and act locally. The crisis in Ukraine — in the part of the world where I come from — has entered its third year. Slovakia is very concerned about the destabilization of a neighbouring country and repeated violence in the region. I would like once again to firmly call for tangible progress in reaching a settlement of the conflict. I believe the Minsk agreements remain the only viable way out of the crisis. Slovakia is ready to continue to assist Ukraine in securing a stable, prosperous and democratic future for all of its citizens.

Not long from now, the General Assembly will appoint a new Secretary-General of the United Nations. This year, the process of selecting the next Secretary-General has been more consultative, transparent and open than ever before. My country has the extraordinary privilege of being part of the process as we have fielded our own candidate. I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation for the Member States' continued support as we approach the final stages of the selection process. Their support also proves that candidates from our region have a lot to offer in terms of potential, capabilities, knowledge and accomplishments.

We are still living in strange, contradictory times. We can upload our personal medical data for an examination by a physician on the opposite side of the globe, and yet 16,000 children die every day, mostly from preventable or treatable causes. We are using autonomous, self-driving cars, but millions of kids still cannot find their way into a classroom. Our phones, powered by artificial intelligence, are speaking to us, but one in 10 people on this planet does not have access to drinkable water.

With all our resources, all our innovative power and all our unprecedented ways of knowledge-sharing, we cannot ignore the opportunities that exist to increase global prosperity, freedom and the dignity of human beings. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been crafted on the basis of our successes and our experience. It is our task to drive the necessary change to make the world a more prosperous, healthy, inclusive and safe place. It is our task to share the wealth of our planet.

Yes, times are uncertain, but I do believe that we can succeed. As one of the Slovak priests who spent years in prison during the totalitarian period of my country's history once said, "I do not know what the future will bring, but I know now how I will act." He could say this because he was always guided by his values.

We can succeed too when we let our values guide us through difficult times — our values of humanity, solidarity and empathy — and when we, the political leaders with the privilege and power of agenda-setting, will not give up the battle for the hearts and minds of our people to remain open to humanity, solidarity and

hope, only then can our world prosper. Only then will we truly leave no one behind.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Slovak Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guyana.

Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Granger: The Co-operative Republic of Guyana congratulates you, Mr. Peter Thomson, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. The election of a representative of Fiji, a small island developing State, to preside over the General Assembly at this session is especially gratifying. The choice of theme for our general debate — "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world" — is most appropriate.

We thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, outgoing President of the General Assembly at its historic seventieth session, for his guidance of the Assembly over the past year.

Guyana commends Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his stellar stewardship of the United Nations during his decennium. The international community owes him an enormous debt of gratitude for the earnest efforts he has indefatigably exerted to alleviate human distress, promote peace and sustain development around the world.

The Secretary-General's courageous campaign to combat the adverse effects of climate change and his commitment to sustainable development have been transformative. His labours bore fruit in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in September 2015, and in the signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in April 2016.

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement have had a massive and undeniable impact on the manner in which the world manages the environment. The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement are evidence of environmental common sense. They are excellent examples of the sort of collective action most likely to ensure a sustainable future and safety for the planet. They are harbingers of hope for everyone, everywhere, forever. The Secretary-General's leadership has irreversibly led the United Nations further along a green path. We thank him heartily.

Guyana is part of this global green movement. Our natural assets, our commitment to sustainable development, our contribution to conquering the adverse effects of climate change and our collaboration with the international community in seeking solutions to global threats have distinguished us an emergent green State. We are a State that will ensure a secure future for our people in the pursuit of a green economy. We are a State that is proud of its place as a reliable and cooperative partner in international efforts to protect the earth's environment.

Guyana recognizes the interlocking objectives of the Agenda and the Agreement. It realizes that the establishment of a green State is consistent with building climate resilience while mitigating the effects of climate change. Guyana promises to continue to work towards the Agenda's goals, particularly by contributing to limiting increases in global temperatures, and to work towards a green path of development that is in accord with the Agreement's nationally determined commitments.

Guyana serendipitously stands at the centre of the Guiana Shield, one of the world's last remaining spheres of virgin tropical rainforest. The Guiana Shield spans an area of 2.7 million square kilometres, an area larger than Greenland, and it is shared by six South American countries and territories — parts of Brazil and Colombia, all of Guyana, all of French Guiana, all of Suriname and part of Venezuela. Guyana, as a part of that Shield, is a net carbon sink. A green canopy of rainforest envelops more than 85 per cent of our land mass, the second highest percentage forest cover on earth. Guyana is pursuing a green path so as to better understand how to protect its precious biodiversity and sustainably manage its complex ecosystems.

Guyana made a covenant with the world to be an exemplar of green growth in 1989, three years before the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. We made a gift to the prospect of sustainable development and to the project of protecting our environment through a generous grant of 371,000 hectares of our pristine forests, to be used as an international model for research, training and the development of technologies that will promote the conservation and the sustainable and equitable use of tropical rainforests in a manner that will lead to lasting ecological, economic and social benefits for the people of Guyana and the world in general. The Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, located in the centre of our country and at the heart of the Guiana Shield, survives and thrives as a testament to Guyana's commitment to sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Guyana is an important partner in the global environmental movement. It entered into an agreement with the Kingdom of Norway to provide the world with a relevant, replicable model of how the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries (REDD-plus mechanism), the mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, can align the development objectives of forest countries with the world's need to combat climate change. It has also entered into agreements with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and other States, and international organizations.

Guyana reaffirms its commitment to Goal 15 of the Agenda under which States Members of the United Nations pledge to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss Guyana is improving the management of its ecosystems and natural resources in order to conserve its forests and their rich biodiversity. We will fulfil our obligation under the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions set forth in the Paris Agreement.

Guyana will continue its research by establishing an international institute for biodiversity at the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development. That institute will allow scientists and students from the Caribbean and around the world to come to our country to increase their knowledge of vital ecosystems and share in the study of the Guiana Shield and its amazing biodiversity.

Goal 13 of the Agenda calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impact. This goal envisages and encourages international cooperation to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and abate the adverse impact of climate change. The Agreement obligates Member States to take action to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse-gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production.

Guyana is developing a comprehensive emissions-reduction programme as part of its responsibility to contribute to global solutions in the face of the threat of climate change. We will set aside an additional 2 million hectares of our territory for conservation purposes. Guyana is pursuing a low-carbon growth trajectory to enhance its contribution to the campaign against climate change through the preservation of its forests, within the ambit of the REDD-plus mechanism. It will contribute up to 48.7 million metric tonnes of carbon-dioxide equivalents to the global mitigation effort, through an avoided-emissions programme.

The Agreement on climate change and the Agenda both emphasize the importance of financial flows in supporting the efforts of States pursuing a green path to development, so that they can meet their adaptation and mitigation obligations and implement the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. I must state, however, that all our efforts — nationally, regionally and globally — for the advancement of development in an environment of peace and stability, are being challenged by the territorial ambitions of our neighbour, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Guyana celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its independence this year. Regrettably, Venezuela acknowledged this anniversary by reasserting, on 26 May, our independence day, its repudiation of a border treaty that it had solemnly signed 117 years ago and ratified and respected for over 60 of the years since then.

I addressed the Assembly last year and warned of the danger that Venezuela posed to the peace and security of our region due not to its internal instability, but to its external assault on Guyana's sovereignty and territorial

integrity (see A/70/PV.16). I placed my hopes in the fact that the process for the final resolution of Venezuela's unworthy territorial claims rested now in the hands of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Since my address last year, Venezuela has used every means to stall, as it has intensified its aggression against Guyana and thwarted all of the Secretary-General's efforts to pursue a way forward, at least in terms of a process that would lead to a final resolution of the controversy.

Guyana stands ready to have the International Court of Justice reach a final determination on the matter. We will work resolutely with the Secretary-General in his final months of office, and with his successor, to free Guyana from this surreal burden. In the Geneva Agreement of 1966, Venezuela agreed that the Secretary-General would determine the means of settlement of this controversy, including by judicial settlement. Yet Venezuela defies his every effort to fulfil that commitment.

The United Nations cannot be a dispassionate party to a threat to peace anywhere and to a challenge to the law of nations. Venezuela's territorial claim is such a challenge. It strikes at the heart of the United Nations. It strikes at the heart of the United States trusteeship of the law of nations. It strikes at the heart of the United Nations Charter, which the Secretary-General is sworn to uphold. Guyana, a small State, must look to the United Nations for protection against threats to its security, for intervention, for peace and for respect for international law.

My plea for international understanding of our plight has nothing to do with Venezuela's internal situation. The ordinary people of Venezuela are our sisters and brothers. Their pain touches our hearts, and we wish them early relief from their agony. However, Venezuela's claims are a threat to Guyana's existence as an independent nation. They are a scandalous revival of the disease of the *conquistadores* that once plagued Venezuela's own history. They are a crime against our humanity, clothed in the verbiage of national honour.

I also wish to iterate Guyana's ongoing support, within the context of the preservation of sovereignty and its link with sustainable development, for the complete removal of the commercial, economic and financial blockade imposed by the United States against another Caribbean country, the Republic of Cuba. We cannot commit to policies that transform our economies with a view to providing development for our peoples and not demonstrate the political will necessary to change systems that are in direct contradiction to those policies.

Guyana is on a path to becoming a green State. However, its efforts — and those of other small States — will be derailed unless there is collective commitment by the greater part of the international community to collaborate with those States determined to pursue a low-carbon, low-emissions path to sustainable development and to stopping the rise of global temperatures.

The road from Stockholm in 1972 to Paris in 2015 has been long and difficult. However, the words of the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment remain as relevant in 2016 as they were 44 years ago, in 1972:

> "A point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences. Through ignorance or indifference we can do massive and irreversible harm to the earthly environment on which our life and well-being depend. Conversely, through fuller knowledge and wiser action, we can achieve for ourselves and our posterity a better life in an environment more in keeping with human needs and hopes... To defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations has become an imperative goal for mankind ..." (*A/CONF./48/14/Rev.1, para. 6*).

The General Assembly at the seventy-first session now has the opportunity and the obligation to commit to measures to defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations, thereby making the road forward into the future an easier one for posterity. Venezuela's aggression against Guyana should not be allowed to threaten our children's future.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guyana for the statement he has just made.

Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Amir of the State of Qatar.

His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the duties of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I wish you every success in fulfilling your tasks. I also wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his efforts during his presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also wish to extend our profound thanks to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon for the efforts he has undertaken to achieve United Nations goals during his tenure.

The international community is facing many challenges and unresolved regional and international crises that have become a hindrance to regional and international development and stability. Some countries continue to pursue an approach with actions that go beyond the framework of international legitimacy against the backdrop of international negligence in the implementation of Security Council resolutions. It is no longer possible to overlook the weakness of the United Nations legal and institutional system and its inability in many cases to apply standards of justice and fairness in the functioning of its mechanisms. There is a persistent recurring pattern that marks all these crises: the selectivity of the Security Council in addressing problems, especially when it comes to the use of force by countries in international relations.

After more than seven decades of Israeli occupation of Arab territories, the Palestinian cause is at standstill, waiting for a just solution. The Government of Israel has not only rejected the resolutions of international legitimacy and the comprehensive Arab Peace Initiative, but it also seeks to impose a fait accompli through long-term plans to build settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem. It has founded its occupation on discrimination and racial segregation. It has established two legal systems under its sovereignty — one for the occupiers and another for those languishing under occupation.

Against the backdrop of the world's silence and the Arab States' involvement in their own current issues, Israel's leaders may believe that they have succeeded in their endeavour. However, they have utterly failed to resolve the issue. The Palestinian people are now more devoted to their rights than ever. Furthermore, the Arab peoples cannot accept any kind of normalization of relations with Israel as long as Israel proceeds with the occupation and its related practices and before a just solution to the Palestinian cause is achieved.

Besides, what will Israel do with the millions of Palestinians who are living on their own land and are increasing in number and resourcefulness? The options are clearly narrowing. Israel has either to opt for the two-State solution or to establish a system of apartheid. Does Israel really think that it could maintain a system of apartheid in the twenty-first century? Eliminating the occupation has become an urgent political and security prerequisite and an international obligation towards a people whose land was occupied and homeland confiscated and whose suffering is exacerbating the situation.

The Security Council bears a special responsibility to impose international legitimacy and consensus with respect to the negotiations on the basis of a two-State solution, including the establishment of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the pre-1967 borders. Meanwhile, it is necessary to cease settlement activities, respect the legal status of Al-Quds, lift the unjust siege on the Gaza Strip and end the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan.

In the past, from this very rostrum, we have warned that inaction in addressing crises will only increase their intensity and complexity and consequently pose a threat to international security. Today, more than five years after the outbreak of the Syrian crisis and in the aftermath of the destruction of most of Syria's cities by the Al-Assad regime, we are meeting again in this Hall. As a result of the crisis, the number of refugees has doubled and the quest for refuge has become transcontinental in scope. Syria is now importing terrorist and sectarian organizations and militias that pose a regional and international threat.

Everyone knows that the Syrian revolution started as a popular and peaceful uprising against a repressive dictatorial regime and that the great people of Syria face death or years of torture in prison if they attend

peaceful demonstrations against the regime. During this period, the Syrian authorities have deliberately tried to turn the revolution into a violent one. It has also acted under the guise of political rhetoric to split the Syrian people into factions, but the people have responded with the chant, "the Syrian people are one". In contrast, the regime's declared slogan was "Al-Assad alone, or we will burn the country down". Many people may not have realized that this slogan is the de facto project of the regime and remains its only programme.

Theoretically, the majority of the countries of the world have stood by the Syrian people, but in practical terms, Syria has been abandoned, supported only by some loyal friends. Red lines had been set for the regime, but it violated them, and those who set the red lines did nothing. The red lines continued to shift until the regime became aware that there were no limits on what it could do without accountability.

It is true that violent radical forces that have nothing to do with the objectives of the Syrian revolution have entered the Syrian arena, refuse to take up revolution's banner and fight against the rebels more than against the regime. There have been many violations, but these phenomena, which have marred the revolution, cannot be understood without also considering the barbaric policy of repression applied by the Syrian regime and the inability of the international community to protect civilians against the use of chemical weapons, bomb barrels and torture.

The city of Daraa presented a model of peaceful revolution, exemplified at the beginning by the tossing of flowers at soldiers, but after massacres claiming the lives of hundreds of innocent people, mostly women and children, the city was forced, like other cities, to defend itself more forcefully. Since then, Daraa has been reeling under non-stop shelling and a starvation siege, despite the fact that it was never controlled by any radical or takfiri organization, and its revolutionaries have not committed any violations.

Why then are the inhabitants of Daraa being displaced while the international community does nothing? Why was no warning issued before the regime began its shelling and depopulation efforts, when warnings have been issued elsewhere, for example, prior to the recent bombing against forces in Al-Hasakah province? We consider the latter warning to have been an appropriate one, but no analogous action was taken with respect to Daraa, Muadamiyat Al-Sham, Madaya, Al-Zabadani or other towns also threatened with displacement. Many Syrian citizens are wondering the same thing.

We cannot fool ourselves or our people because it is unacceptable that the will of the international community is crippled when it comes to the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. It is simply not true that it was impossible to protect the Syrian people. The international community has allowed illegal military interventions to be undertaken to overthrow regimes in our region, which is still taking its toll on us. Unfortunately, while many of us share responsibility for that situation, the international community has not stepped in to protect a defenceless people, despite the fact that this people has proved time and again that it could change the regime on its own if they were protected by the international community from bombardment.

Putting an end to this humanitarian disaster has become a political and moral necessity. The Security Council has a historical and undeniable responsibility to stop the bloodshed of the Syrians by halting the barbaric bombings and blockades of cities, by repatriating the displaced and by taking measures to resume the political process within the framework of resolution 2254 (2015) and decisions based on the first Geneva Convention, which call for the formation of a transitional ruling body with full powers to meet the aspirations of the Syrian people and maintain the unity and sovereignty of Syria, on the basis of equal rights for all citizens of Syria, without discrimination on the basis of faith, creed, ethnicity or race.

The Gulf region has strategic importance at both regional and global levels. This region is undergoing several crises that vary widely in character but are similar at the core. Constructive dialogue must be undertaken if solutions to them are to be found. To achieve the desired result, dialogue between countries must be based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and non-interference in the affairs of others. The success of dialogue among parties within a State, as we have seen in Iraq, requires giving priority to political and social consensus and strengthening the concept of full and equal citizenship before the law, leaving aside all forms of sectarianism.

With respect to Yemen, the State of Qatar renews its support for the return of legitimacy as the only way to ensure its security, unity and stability. There is no doubt that the negligence of the international

community in implementing resolutions of the Security Council, especially resolution 2216 (2015), has given some political forces in Yemen the opportunity to carry out coup-related actions that have hampered reaching the desired political solution that would satisfy the Yemeni people's yearning for unity and stability.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of my brother, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, who has sponsored the Yemeni negotiations hosted by his country. We will continue to support the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen as well as the international efforts undertaken to resume political consultations among Yemeni parties in order to reach a political settlement, in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and resolution 2216 (2015).

Although the situation in Libya is still turbulent, we look forward to restoring stability through the efforts of the Presidential Council and the present Government backed by the international community. We also look forward to confronting terrorism and tackling its serious effects. The State of Qatar has contributed to the success of the international political solution. We reaffirm our support for all efforts aimed at strengthening the Libyan national accord and warn that instability could deal a glancing blow to what has been achieved heretofore and undermine United Nations efforts aimed at promoting national reconciliation and led by the Security Council.

We are surprised to note that some countries support forces in Libya that have rejected the international solution and are acting to thwart resolution 1970 (2011) by force, despite the fact that the resolution provides for imposing sanctions on such forces. Certain forces have placed themselves under the authority of the Presidential Council and are engaged in combating terrorism, but others have rejected the international solution and sought to exploit the volatile situation by occupying oil-export terminals while the world looks on, silent. Is this a proper way to encourage Libyans to fight terrorism?

The terrorism we are facing is a threat to our peoples, countries and economic and social achievements, thereby requiring that we intensify our efforts to combat it. All of us are mindful that success in countering this dangerous phenomenon is not easily reached, but it is not impossible either, especially when there is the political will to address the social roots of this abhorrent phenomenon. We need to understand the circumstances that, in an atmosphere of desperation and deadlocked perspectives, give rise to radical ideologies.

We need to protect the young people who are targeted by extremist groups. Fighting terrorism is not confined to the security dimension; rather, we need to go a step further and promote the values of tolerance, culture, plurality and dialogue, while taking into account the right of people to resist occupation, which is a right that has been enshrined in international laws, covenants and norms.

To restore our credibility, we must carefully define terrorism and diligently stand against it, if we are to educate our young people and mobilize our communities against this scourge. The definition we choose should not vary according to the identity of the perpetrator or the victim or because of a particular political interest. We have seen cases, for example, where a certain organization, misbranded as terrorist when it was simply a political adversary, was later embraced as a friend when it became a temporary ally.

Distinctions should not be made about the lives of civilians, whether they be from Istanbul, Gaza, New York or Aleppo. No life is more important or valuable than any other life. The double standards used to address this phenomenon, by linking terrorism to a certain faith or culture or by absolving Governments that engage in it from being described as terrorist, complicates efforts to uproot the phenomenon and reinforces pretexts being used by terrorists to justify their actions. In this context, and as a natural consequence of our policy of rejecting radicalism and terrorism based on our values and culture and the teachings of the true Islamic religion, we reiterate our support for the efforts to eradicate the phenomenon of terrorism that are undertaken within the framework of international legitimacy.

Respect for and the protection and promotion of human rights constitute one of the basic pillars of the United Nations Charter's stated purposes and principles and are consistent with the Arab and Islamic principles and values that treasure humankind and honour it as a creation of almighty God. The State of Qatar is eager to implement its obligations at both the national and international levels to defend collective and individual rights of people and promote human rights around the world.

Accordingly, one of the most important challenges we must act upon today is that of protecting refugees. This challenge requires cooperation and joint action in order to uproot the causes of forced displacement. We must urgently provide aid and assistance as a humanitarian duty incumbent upon us all. Qatar's development and relief contribution has reached more than 100 countries worldwide, and we continue to coordinate with Governmental and non-governmental agencies to provide even more development and relief aid.

Qatar supports over 10 million children around the world and promotes the potential of some 1.2 million Arab young people, so as to empower them to be active and productive in their communities. Over the past five years since 2011, the value of the economic assistance provided by the State of Qatar has increased threefold to reach 13 billion Qatari riyals.

The State of Qatar will continue to be a venue for dialogue and conflict resolution by peaceful means. It will also remain committed to international action, cooperation and partnership within the framework of the efforts of the international community to counter shared humanitarian challenges.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Amir of the State of Qatar for the statement he has just made.

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. El Haycen (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Mauricio Macri, President of the Argentine Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Argentine Republic.

Mr. Mauricio Macri, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mauricio Macri, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Macri (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to be here today for the first time to represent the Argentine Republic before the General Assembly.

We are living in a time of great global transformation, where changes take place at an increasingly rapid pace and provide us with new opportunities. In the twenty-first century we are faced with a continuous challenge, namely, that of adapting to the new realities of global interdependency. Building a modern international order is an ongoing task in which we are all protagonists.

The principles of the Organization guide us to encourage dialogue and cooperation between our countries in order to achieve development, peace and international security. In the first 71 years of the United Nations, important advances have been made. However, there is still much to be done. The United Nations has proposed a horizon towards which we should advance. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a goal that we should approach collectively.

I am proud to represent a country that has contributed to the international legal framework, driving advances in human rights, humanitarian rights and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. With the Sustainable Development Goals in mind, it makes us proud that our Governmental priorities are in line with those of the international community. In Argentina, we have set ourselves three main objectives.

Our first goal is to move towards zero poverty. That means becoming a country with equal opportunities, where our children can shape their future and where every Argentinian is able to develop his or her potential. A country like ours, which is a food-producing powerhouse, cannot accept the fact that there are people going hungry anywhere the world.

Our second goal is to defeat drug trafficking. The world drug problem, addiction and violence associated with organized crime requires that we work together towards a comprehensive agenda, based on human rights and focused on both supply and demand.

Our third goal is to unite Argentinians through dialogue, respect for the rule of law and the strengthening of democracy. For in the twenty-first century, the quality of political leadership is measured by the ability to build bridges and create trust. These are elements that every society needs to properly function. Argentinians have chosen that path, namely,

that of trusting one another, engaging in dialogue and speaking honestly to each other.

An important step in this direction was working on the problems of the past in order to be able to look towards the future. We have rebalanced the macroeconomy and began to strengthen relations with our neighbouring countries. We are establishing mature links with other countries and multilateral organizations, and we are already starting to see results. We have returned to international credit markets, and many companies have demonstrated that they trust Argentina. New investments are announced every day, which will lead to jobs and put the country on track to expand its economy. Argentines are ready to enter into the twenty-first century and assume our role in the international community.

However, we cannot achieve any of those goals alone. We have to work together, starting with our neighbours. I am from a region that thinks of itself as a common neighbourhood with shared challenges. In recent years, Latin America has made huge efforts to reduce poverty, thanks to robust social policies and to the very favourable international economic conditions. But today the context is different. All of our countries have experienced diminished growth, while global trade has shown weak performance. At the regional level, the balance of trade is less favourable and inflation punishes those who have less.

But we in Argentina are optimistic. We know that, in order to grow inclusively, Latin America must count on a tremendous amount of human talent as well as incomparable natural wealth. While in the world there are trends that generate worry and uncertainty, encouraging news is coming from our region, such as the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States and the peacebuilding process in Colombia. In addition, we see conditions for creating a corridor of peace from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean throughout the region, which will contribute to regional stability and prosperity.

But the challenges of global governance in the twenty-first century do not exclusively belong to some countries or regions; they concern everyone. We must cooperate, while thinking globally and acting locally and without losing sight of the first principle of this Organization, which is based on the sovereign equality of all of its Members. A world with more voices is a more just world. That is why it is important that we continue building a system based on clear rules that reflect diversity and plurality and that facilitate consensus.

Climate change is the greatest, most important challenge that humankind faces. Only if we are aware of that fact will we be able to make progress without jeopardizing our future and the future of future generations. We in Argentina are betting ambitiously on renewable energy to develop our potential in areas such as solar, wind and biomass energy generation. We signed the Paris Agreement and we are proud of being one of the first countries to complete the ratification process. That is why we call upon the international community to put forth its greatest efforts so that we can soon see the Agreement enter into force, which is so important for our future.

Another major challenge is the problem of refugees. Although a year ago we made a commitment to leave nobody behind, the images we see today hurt and worry us. This reality calls for us to do more. Our White Helmets are widely recognized for their commitment to humanitarian matters, which is why, last May, Argentina was present in the Syrian conflict zone to offer assistance at a refugee camp in Lebanon. I would like to announce that we are going to accept even more refugees from Syria and from its neighbouring countries, favouring families with children. We have established a national cabinet of ministers charged with broadening the existing humanitarian programme, which coordinates ministries and Governmental departments and addresses security measures and full social integration. We will be able to gradually increase our ability to receive more people to the extent that financial support, technical assistance and international logistical support allow us to do.

Gender equality is also a primary goal of ours, upon which we have to work with conviction and political determination. Argentina is making the full empowerment of women its State policy. We have established a national action plan for prevention and assistance for women at risk in order to put an end to violence against women in all of its forms. We are working with a cross-cutting approach so that women will have the same social, political, economic and cultural opportunities in the country as men. In this regard, we are grateful for the support that Susana Malcorra, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, has received as a candidate to be the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. In the twenty-first century, having a

woman as the head of the Organization would be a very encouraging example.

When the Organization was founded, countries assumed the commitment of maintaining international peace and security. However, we live in a world that is increasingly violent, where radical extremism threatens innocent people and vulnerable populations. It should be remembered that, in 1992 and in 1994, Argentina was a victim of international terrorism, with two attacks, for which we hope to receive greater international cooperation in clarifying events and punishing those responsible. My country condemns any group that through its actions aims to promote terror in any part of the planet.

In recent years, this phenomenon has worsened. To stop it, international cooperation is indispensable. We have to promote development both inside and outside of our countries because development does not stop at the border. Growth with inclusion, dialogue and tolerance — and the creation of opportunities — all help to reduce the marginalization and humiliation that fuels the recruitment of terrorists.

Dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes make up the cornerstone of the foreign policy of a democratic Argentina. That is why I reiterate our call for dialogue with the United Kingdom, as called for in many resolutions of this Organization, so as to amicably resolve the sovereignty dispute that we have had for almost two centuries over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. We have shown interest in advancing our bilateral relationship, which can and should be mutually beneficial. That is why we trust that it will be possible to find a definitive solution to this prolonged dispute.

I would like to conclude with a thought. Argentina, which has just celebrated 200 years of independence, is a country that has always opened its doors to men and women from around the world seeking a better life. There is a piece of each part of the world in my country. We coexist peacefully — Christians, Jews and Muslims. Diversity enriches our society, and we embrace openness within a world where fragmentation is burgeoning. Let us say to the world, we need not fear interdependency. This world is our shared home, which is why we must take care of it. We must learn to coexist peacefully, just as Pope Francis has called upon on us to do. Fostering a sense of integration and working together will only strengthen us. Let us continue to build networks and bridge gaps. The members of the Assembly can count on Argentina. We have much to say and to contribute.

Please allow me to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his work in leading the Organization. His legacy has difficult challenges, which is why we must continue with our efforts. Over the years, the United Nations has shown us the importance of pursuing a better world. Now it is time for us to put forth all of our creativity and political will to make our vision of a better world a reality.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Argentine Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mauricio Macri, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the French Republic.

Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hollande (*spoken in French*): It is always an honour for me to address the General Assembly. It is also a responsibility — above all given the serious and worrying situation in the world. I stand before those present on behalf of France to issue several appeals. First, I would like to ask all members to do everything possible to implement the historic Agreement that was signed in Paris on 12 December 2015. The Agreement was historic because the conference was held at a time when Paris, the capital of France, had been struck by terrorist attacks. The Agreement was historic because, for the first time, the assembled international community agreed to make a commitment to reducing global warming and mobilizing financing, while

allowing the most vulnerable countries to make an energy transition.

And yet, standing before the Assembly, let me state once again that despite the momentous nature of the Agreement, there is no time to lose. The past two years have been the hottest known to humankind since records began. Admittedly, in April 2016, right here with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, an agreement was signed with 175 countries. But everyone here knows that it will come into force only if it is ratified by 55 per cent of countries, representing 55 per cent of greenhouse-gas emissions. The United States and China have announced their decision to ratify, which is very important. Nothing would have been possible without the participation and the commitment of those two countries, which are the largest emitters of carbon dioxide. France itself will notify the United Nations tomorrow that it has completed its ratification procedure. I appeal to all members to speed up their ratification procedures so that the goal is met by the end of the year.

The twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-21) was a conference of decisions. The twenty-second session, to be held in Marrakech, should be a conference of solutions. It is a question of implementing the International Solar Alliance, fighting desertification, protecting the seas and also setting a carbon price.

However, the appeal I want to issue to the Assembly, following this climate agreement, is an appeal for Africa. Africa is a continent full of promise, but its development could be hindered by climate change, migration, conflict, war and terrorism. The continent has a bright future; however, it may also be the one to cause growing insecurity, and that insecurity targets, first and foremost, Africans themselves.

That is why, on behalf of France, I am proposing a 2020 agenda for Africa. The plan should make it possible for all Africans to gain access to electricity. Two thirds of Africans today are deprived of it. That is an injustice, but above all it impedes sustainable growth in Africa. What is at stake, therefore, is responding to the needs of 15 per cent of the world population. What is at stake is enabling Africans to benefit from their immense potential for development. What is at issue here is reducing population displacements, that is, migration, which leads to the destabilization of both countries of origin and destination.

That is why, at the Paris Conference, I launched the African Renewable Energy Initiative. Ten donors — and I want thank them here — pledged to donate $10 billion by 2020. France has assumed 20 per cent of that amount, or €2 billion. Europe has decided on an external investment plan, which could reach — still with a view to providing Africans with access to electricity — nearly €40 billion, and even double that amount if European Union member States contribute as well. I call on all countries to join that effort. I am not just calling for solidarity here — for this is a mutual investment that will benefit the whole world — I call for this to happen as soon as possible.

But there will be no development in Africa unless the continent's security is ensured. When I committed France to acting in Mali, it did so with an awareness of its responsibility. We had to prevent terrorist groups from taking over an entire country and destabilizing an entire region. Today, that threat has been rolled back and Mali is regaining its territorial integrity. But other groups, including Boko Haram and Al-Qaida, are emerging to threaten the security of many countries in West Africa, the Sahel and the Lake Chad region. There too, France is supporting military forces with training, information-sharing and assistance in the fight against terrorism. We are doing so, for instance, in the Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Benin and Cameroon. We should expand such efforts along with the United Nations and the African Union.

Let us be clear — the security of Africans has to come from Africans themselves if we want to avoid external intrusion and interference. My appeal for development and renewable energy is also a call for the security of Africans, for equipping their armies and giving them the means to respond, and for these African nations to organize their own development in a free and sovereign manner.

The last call I wish to make here is perhaps the saddest of all. It is for Syria. The Syrian tragedy will go down in history as a disgrace for the international community if we do not end it quickly. Aleppo is today a martyred city, and this is how it shall remain in historical memory. Thousands of children have died in bombings, entire populations are starving, humanitarian convoys are being attacked, and chemical weapons are being used.

I have one thing to say in this regard — enough is enough. Just like in February, the ceasefire held for only a few days. It ended practically the day after its announcement, before its terms were even understood. The regime is responsible for its failure and cannot be exonerated for mistakes that could have been made by others. I would say to its foreign supporters — and we all know who they are — that they need to compel the regime's hand to peace. If they do not then they, alongside the regime, shall bear responsibility for the division and chaos in Syria.

The Security Council must meet as soon as possible. It should not be a theatre of fools — in other words, a place where responsibility can be evaded and where some can impede its work in order to protect a regime while they should be seeking a solution with us. France has four demands. First, we must first impose the ceasefire in line with the decisions that have been taken. That is the precondition. Secondly, we need to ensure the immediate delivery of humanitarian aid to Aleppo and other martyred cities. That is the priority. Thirdly, we must ensure the resumption of political negotiations along the lines of the transition established in 2012. That is the solution. Fourthly, we must sanction the use of chemical weapons. That is justice.

If we take these decisions and act now, there will be a solution for Syria. In fact, it will be more than a solution; there will finally be hope for refugees and displaced persons. There will finally be action that will allow Syria to maintain its territorial integrity. We are also determined to see an intervention in Iraq that will help to free the entire country from the Da'esh occupation of its territory. If we decide to act effectively against terrorism, we can prevent further terrorist attacks around the world. The risk is chaos and division, and it exists beyond Syria. It also exists in Libya. Our priority must be to re-establish the State around the Government of National Accord led by Prime Minister Al-Sarraj — a goal for which France is working with its partners and the United Nations.

We cannot sit back and do nothing. That would be playing into the hands of the forces, terrorists in particular, that aim to destabilize the world. France shall never resign itself, even if it is difficult — especially if it is difficult — and that is why it has taken the initiative to contribute to seeking a solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Of course, no one can impose a solution on the parties, but once again, resigning ourselves to the status quo involves taking a risk. It means allowing settlement to take place once again. It means once again allowing unjust, unfair and unacceptable violence to take place. The objective, therefore, is to meet here at the end of the year and hold a conference at which Israelis and Palestinians can assume their responsibilities to negotiate.

This same spirit led me, along with Chancellor Merkel, to seek a solution in Ukraine. It led to the creation of the Normandy format, which allowed us to come to an agreement in Minsk. Today, we must do everything we can to ensure that the agreement is implemented; if we do not, there will be renewed violence and perhaps even the resumption of war. I recall that this conflict has claimed more than 6,000 victims. I have therefore taken the initiative, along with the Chancellor of Germany, to bring together the Russian and Ukrainian Presidents in the weeks to come to promote progress in the implementation of the Minsk accords.We will not abandon that goal. We will renounce no initiative that we think may be useful.

I have raised the issue of terrorism, which threatens every country of the world. Long is the list of all those whom it has impacted in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe and even Oceania. No country can claim to be immune to the threat of Islamist terrorism, fundamentalism and fanaticism, which have seduced and radicalized lost individuals within our societies. There is no sea or wall that can protect a country from this tragedy and the scourge of terrorist action, attacks or aggressions. Terrorism thrives on open conflicts that have remained unsolved for too long. It has provoked a wave of refugees and undermined international order, borders that we thought fixed, law that we thought we could maintain and the collective security that was the very principle of the United Nations.

In the face of these dangers, France once again turns to the United Nations. The United Nations has shown its effectiveness with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which many thought was impossible. United Nations peacekeeping operations have never been as numerous as they are now.

However, if we want to act to eradicate terrorism, we will need to make decisions and not merely talk of solidarity when a friendly country is attacked or merely express compassion for the victims. We must shoulder responsibilities whenever that can be useful. That is what France does. Not because it is attacked — today, as I have said, every country is a target for terrorism. No, France does it because it is a permanent member of the Security Council and its role is about acting, not

creating obstacles. France does it because it has one great idea, the idea that it has upheld throughout its history — bringing freedom, democracy and justice to the world. It is because France puts its policies at the service of a single goal — peace — and talks to everyone involved. It is because France is an independent nation that respects the law and has no enemies other than the forces of hatred and intolerance that use a betrayed religion to create fear. It is because we must fight the populists who exploit distress in order to divide, separate, stigmatize and pit religions against one another, risking confrontations that would have terrible consequences for cohesion in our societies. France is a secular country that proclaims itself as such but that speaks to every religion and guarantees freedom of worship on its soil, because the only interests we have in the world are stability, development and the future of our planet.

That is why France is so committed to the United Nations and demonstrates it every day. I want to pay tribute to the President of the General Assembly, to all who dedicate themselves to the United Nations, beginning with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who for 10 years has led this difficult mission on behalf of all of us and enabled us to advance its cause. And that is also why, in the face of the major challenges I have mentioned, especially Syria and the fight against terrorism, I expect the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities. There comes a moment for every generation and public official when the only question worth asking is whether we have made decisions — and whether they are good decisions. The countries here are all different sizes, at different levels of development and with different sensitivities and beliefs, but they should have only one goal and one demand, which is that the world should rise to the challenges facing the planet.

That is why I want to appeal to all those here — to call for implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, for ensuring that Africa and all Africans have electricity and better development, and for peace in Syria, because it is so urgently needed. That is why I believe in the United Nations, and that is why both France and I are sending a universal message.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the French Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi.

Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mutharika: I am delighted and happy to be addressing the General Assembly today, and I would like to join my fellow leaders in congratulating the President on his election as its leader. The world has shown its confidence in him, and we are confident that he will steer the ship to the shore of our dreams. His election also testifies to our belief in the equality of our Member States, irrespective of their size.

I would also like to sincerely commend His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his exceptional leadership during his tenure of office. We wish him every success in his future endeavours. I believe we will find an equally competent person to replace him. I have also noted with appreciation that the process of selecting the Secretary-General has, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, begun to address issues of transparency and democracy. If our job is to promote the political virtues of transparency and democracy around the world, we must indeed also be the first to show ourselves to be transparent and democratic.

We have engaged in a unanimous drive to transform our world. We have agreed that our road to a better world must follow the signposts of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which show us the road to ending poverty in the world. Today, we gather to look back on the road of progress and to renew our commitment to pursue those Goals to the end.

The mission of every generation should be to leave our world a better place for subsequent generations.

But our generation faces mountains of challenges. Our world stands in great peril. Innocent souls continue to suffer from the tragedy of wars. Many lives are maimed, mutilated or cut short. Political instability continues to shake the foundations of our dreams. Conflicts have scattered communities and driven them from their homes in endless migrations. We are caught in unending cycles of suffering, violence, terrorism, radicalization, extremism, abductions and human trafficking. That is a story that we can have no pride in recounting to the next generations. Our world is living a story of indignity and shame. Our planet is in great danger. Everywhere, global warming threatens our existence with hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, wildfires, extreme flooding and droughts, dangers that threaten the fragile economies of Africa and the Third World everywhere. Africa, and the rest of the developing world, is suffering from dehumanizing poverty, the pain of hunger, disease, inequalities and gender imbalances.

Most of these are tragedies and challenges of our own creation. And the solutions lie in our hands. The choices for human destiny around the world lie with us in the Assembly. Those challenges must be resolved by us, for nobody else can resolve them. It must be done here, or nowhere else. It must be now, or never.

We have risen to the occasion of our times and begun the journey of conquest with the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. But we have only just begun. The sustainability of our pursuit and the attainment of our goals depend upon our common understanding and our walking together as a community of humankind. Malawi is doing its part and will continue to do its part. We continue to guarantee basic human rights because we can progress only with people who are free. We offer every care to our brothers and sisters who seek refuge in Malawi because we have a duty to humankind. We ensure peace, stability, security and tranquillity for everyone because we must create an environment for progress. We govern with the principles of democracy and the rule of law because humankind is safe only when everybody is accountable. And we pledge to continue living in peace with all of our neighbours because we value peace and harmony.

Malawi's commitment to international peace and security is on record. We have been sending peacekeeping forces to various parts of Africa and beyond for a long time. I am happy to report that Malawi's record in peacekeeping is illustrative and outstanding. In that regard, we are committed to the work of the United Nations. As a beacon of peace, we also actively pursue the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 project "Silencing the guns by 2020" — and silence the guns we must.

On the economic front, Malawi continues to register steady but considerable progress, despite the attendant challenges. The country registered a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 3.2 per cent in 2015, as compared with the global average of 3 per cent, and is expected to reach 5 per cent in 2016. Although inflation has been negatively affected by the food shortage, bulk maize importation should help to reduce inflation and consequently improve lending rates. Our domestic and foreign debts are within sustainable levels. And the economy is progressively generating much-needed jobs, particularly among our youth. Moving forward, the combination of robust fiscal and macroeconomic reform programmes that the country is implementing is projected to lead to further GDP growth, single-digit inflation and low lending rates, which will in turn lead to increased confidence, greater investment, more jobs and improved incomes.

Our only major setback in the last two years was the effects of climate change. In 2015, we experienced terrible floods that affected over half of the country. In 2016, we endured just the opposite, as yet again half of the country was affected, this time by a scorching drought. When we consider climate change, let us remember that there are real souls out there suffering the effects. We, as a country, will do our duty to humankind. This afternoon, I will sign the Paris Agreement on Climate Change here at Headquarters and commit my Government to the ratification and implementation of that crucial document. Malawi has already adopted a climate change policy, which will guide our domestic implementation of the Paris Agreement. We are taking action on climate change.

Let me also put on record that Malawi is making exemplary progress in the health sector. We are pioneering innovative approaches to the management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We are among the few countries on the African continent that have successfully rolled out the test-and-treat programme. We are managing the pandemic. But we need concerted efforts to manage non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and cancer.

On gender equality, Malawi is taking proactive measures to reduce the vulnerability of women and adolescent girls to violence and abuse. Consequently, we are focusing on addressing gender-based violence and balancing reproductive and productive roles in order to enhance women's participation in decision-making. This work entails collaboration with traditional leaders, in order to tackle retrogressive traditional practices that harm our women and the girl child. We have also enhanced legal and policy reforms and improved our law enforcement mechanism in that area. We are adopting the Gender Equality Act: Implementation and Monitoring Plan 2016-2020 as well as improved gender-sensitive data-collection approaches.

On trade issues, investment and market access, Malawi continues to open up the economy and offer numerous investment opportunities. We have opened up to investors in the mining, manufacturing, agriculture and adding value, tourism, transport, water, energy and financial sectors. We are rapidly improving our business climate. We are ready to do business with the world. I therefore invite the global community to patronize the annual Malawi Investment Forum, to be held in Lilongwe on 10 and 11 October. It is imperative that regional and global markets be free of distortions such as subsidies, tariffs and non-tariff barriers. We must live up to the aspirations of the World Trade Organization Doha Development Agenda. The global community must realize that it is only by taking such steps that African countries will be able to produce and add value to their commodities. That will generate the necessary jobs to keep our young people in the continent and propel our economies to sustainable growth and prosperity.

Without investments in those areas, it will continue to be a challenge to prevent African youth from taking desperate and dangerous action by crossing the seas and oceans to reach developed economies. Such investments will also reduce the risk of our youth being lured into radicalism and extremism, with the attendant threat to domestic and international peace and security. I must underline that poverty in African communities is a danger to the global community because poverty and the disenchantment of our youth can be an easy source of radicalization.

Speaking in my capacity as United Nations Youth Champion, I am fully committed to the promotion of youth development and harnessing the demographic dividend in Malawi, across the African Continent and beyond. I am delighted to report that the African Union has adopted "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend" as its theme for 2017. I wish, therefore, to call upon global leaders to join the efforts of the African Union and our global partners in prioritizing investments in our youth, in order to accelerate socioeconomic transformation and development at the global level.

On United Nations reform, the common African position is the one espoused as the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Our firm belief is that the attainment of the SDGs cannot happen in an environment that is devoid of representation, fairness, efficiency, transparency and accountability, such as at the Security Council. My country therefore earnestly supports all efforts and work currently under way to find a suitable vehicle for the reform and revitalization of the United Nations, and shall seek every possible way to contribute to the appropriate solution on the matter.

Let me conclude by reiterating that Malawi is making every effort to overcome the decades of underdevelopment, disease and hunger that have retarded the development of the country. That is our quest for the dignity of our people and their place in the world. Malawi is set to be a productive partner in our collective push to transform our world. We are the leaders of that transformation. We are the generation that must transform the world. History demands our collective leadership.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Malawi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tabaré

Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vázquez (*spoke in Spanish*): As a citizen and the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, it is an honour for me to speak to the General Assembly again from this rostrum. In this forum, which is the largest and most representative of humankind today, I offer the greetings of the citizens and the Government of my country. Our greetings reflect the values of peace, freedom, democracy, justice and solidarity, which define our nation and the United Nations, which we helped found in 1945, and today we are a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

As this is not my first time here, I run the risk of repeating what I said on previous occasions, and in particular what I said on 29 September 2016 in the General Assembly at its seventieth session (see A/70/PV.16). But I am taking that risk because, with only a few exceptions, all the issues that I raised a year ago can be conveyed in the same terms and, in some cases, even graver ones.

Let us be clear: I do not say that as a reproach, and even less so as self-praise. It is painfully obvious, however, that despite the efforts of the United Nations to fight terrorism, violence, intolerance, discrimination, poverty, inequality, injustice and organized crime, these scourges continue to plague much of humankind. For it is our modest belief that the task of Governments and, moreover, of rulers — that is to say, our task, which has been entrusted to us by our citizens — cannot be limited to making assessments and telling people what is amiss. Our unconditional duty is to create the conditions for our people to build their own lives in society and to support them in that task. What I am saying does not seem like much, but it is a lot.

Without ignoring the enormous importance of other issues under consideration by the Assembly, let me refer to one that perhaps is not in the news, but it is certainly important because, as the data provided by the World Health Organization shows it is the primary cause of mortality throughout the world, especially in low- and middle- income countries. I am mainly talking about non-communicable diseases, in particular cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic pulmonary diseases. Clearly, the consequent terrible impact that these diseases have on humankind fly under the radar of our Governments, but they nevertheless tragically affect the lives of our peoples. And these avoidable diseases are largely due to four risk factors directly linked to supposedly typically modern behaviours, that is, smoking, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.

The primary effects of those risk factors are dramatically felt increasingly in middle- and low-income countries, and the poorest people in every country, strongly reflecting the underlying socioeconomic determiners. Among these populations, the conditions are ripe for creating a vicious cycle. Poverty exposes people to the behavioural risk factors that lead to non-communicable diseases and these, in turn, tend to worsen the state of poverty of the affected individuals and families. Health systems are also affected by the impact of the high costs of the treatments that are needed to treat chronic non-communicable diseases. To give an idea of the financial implications, and without being dramatic, I want to draw members' attention to the following statistics, which they certainly already know.

First, the direct cost of smoking on the national health-care systems of Latin America is estimated at $33 billion. That is the equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the gross domestic product of our region and 7 per cent of what it spends annually on health care. And the tax that our countries impose on tobacco products does not amount to 50 per cent of the costs of illnesses directly caused by smoking. Secondly, in 2009 the overall estimated economic cost of cancer in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America amounted to an estimated $286 billion in direct costs — for example, doctors' visits and medical analyses — and indirect costs, including travel and lodging expenses and lost workdays and productivity, among others. Therefore, in our humble view, unless we vigorously fight the epidemic of non-communicable diseases in countries and social groups that are most exposed or affected, the impact of those diseases will grow. And the plausible global goal of reducing poverty, which is timely and adopted by the Assembly as the condition sine qua non for sustainable development, rather than drawing closer, dramatically, retreats more each day beyond our reach.

If we look at the statistics available, in a single working day approximately 104,109 people worldwide will die today as a result of the diseases I mentioned. How then can we not design and implement strategies to control alcohol and tobacco consumption and to promote healthful lifestyles, such as a healthful diet and physical exercise. No doubt what I am saying here is a

far cry from what those who preceded me in addressing the Assembly have said. While I hope I am mistaken, if we do not take appropriate measures, our countries, especially the poorest and most humble among them, will suffer dramatic consequences due to those diseases, which, I repeat, can be prevented. Of course, this is not a medical panel or a scientific symposium. But as a political leader who has not forgotten his medical profession and continues to be involved in it, allow me to tell the Assembly that not only is it possible to design and implement such strategies, but that very positive results can be achieved.

Those are not easy or simply strategies, but they are essential and can yield good results. Uruguayans know this from our own real-life experiences. But more than that, we have in place actual projects that we are working on. As on this issue there is also no future without solidarity, we call upon all countries, Governments and peoples, non-governmental organizations, as well as scientific, medical and international organizations, to form an alliance under the United Nations against the epidemic of non-communicable diseases — an alliance for a healthy life and as broad, vigorous and dynamic as possible. It is possible — not easy, but possible. In many ways, more than financial resources, it requires conviction and political will to go ahead.

Uruguay is a world leader in the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. But there have been opponents to that leadership. Among them, at the beginning of the year 2010, a claim was brought before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes by the tobacco firm Philip Morris. That company was suing our country because of its opposition to two regulations adopted by our country in order to control tobacco. In addition to the formal arguments brought by that tobacco firm, the main reason for its action was to punish a small country like Uruguay that had decided to control tobacco consumption and to work hard for the health and right to live of our people. The lawsuit was a punishment, using our small country as an example, so that all countries that were implementing or planning to implement similar policies would learn from this lesson not to go forward with them.

The proceedings were lenghthy, meandering and costly. In the end, though, on 8 July, the arbitral tribunal of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes handed down its final ruling. It was decisively favourable to Uruguay. None of the claimants' arguments were accepted and, more important, the policies adopted by our country were recognized as sovereign, legitimate and in line with the international commitments Uruguay had undertaken and in accord with international law. But things do not happen by coincidence. In that regard, I would like to thank the World Health Organization, many of the countries represented here and all the institutions and individuals who in one way or another supported Uruguay's cause in this dispute. I thank all of them sincerely on behalf of the Uruguayan people. The best way to return such support — and without being ignorant of the circumstances under which we live today — we commit ourselves to continue working hard, as our modest means allow — to help all the people of the world succeed in meaningfully defending their rights to health and life.

Uruguay is not unaware of the circumstances in other regions of the world. Again, we are not indifferent. Allow me to address some of those issues.

First, we would like to congratulate the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. We reiterate to them our willingness and readiness to continue cooperating with the parties in the new and demanding stages of the peace process.

Secondly, in our address to the General Assembly in 2015 (see A/70/PV.16) we expressed our desire that the seventieth session would be the last at which our country had to call for an end to the economic, trade and financial embargo so unfairly imposed by the United States on Cuba. So long as the embargo remains in place, Uruguay will continue to demand here its definitive lifting.

Thirdly, we are not indifferent to the complex political and institutional situations that exist in several brother nations. As good brothers, we hope that such difficulties will sovereignly resolved on the basis of democratic institutional frameworks and in a calm, respectful and sincere dialogue among the parties involved. The will of citizens, the will of the people, must be thoroughly respected.

I very much appreciate the attention the Assembly has given to me today. On behalf of the Uruguayan people, a small country in South America's Southern Cone, I would like to reiterate that, within our modest means, we will continue to work with members to strive for a more fraternal world with more solidarity

for more social justice, with peace, with respect and with tolerance for all inhabitants of the planet.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Abdullah II: Allow me to express today my highest regard for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his dedication and tireless efforts to advance the cause of peace and global harmony. I have deeply appreciated our work together over the past 10 years.

As I stand here today, elections to Jordan's national Parliament are coming to a conclusion. It is one more step on our country's positive evolutionary path — a path to which we have insistently conformed despite regional turbulence and a massive refugee burden. It represents an achievement that can be credited largely to our citizens, especially our youth, who have stubbornly held to Jordan's heritage of unity, strength and forward-looking spirit in spite of the odds. And it is those very odds that make the elections a true triumph of progress over regression.

As we gather here today, there are forces at play in my region and beyond whose sole purpose is to stack the odds against the core values that bind our common humanity. I am referring, of course, to the network of extremist terrorists who have dominated headlines of late. And they seek global dominance as well. They want to wipe out our achievements and those of our ancestors, to erase them and drag us back to the Dark Ages.

The question we must ask ourselves as we face the battle of our generation is what our legacy will be. Will we pass on to our children a world dominated by dread and division, where safety and security will be at the forefront of their minds as they board an airplane, attend a concert or football match, or stroll through a mall? Most important, are we doing what must be done to confront and decisively defeat this evil force, so that our children can live in a world where fear and suspicion are replaced by human comradery and hope, so they can reach their fullest potential and add to the stockpile of human achievement accrued over the ages?

As much as I wish it were otherwise, sadly the answer to those questions is no. How can we be effective in this fight when we have not clearly defined who the enemy is? Who are we fighting with, and who are we fighting against? And I am struck today, after several years of facing the global war on terror, by the lack of understanding of the true nature of Islam that I find among many Western officials, think tanks, media leaders and policymakers. I find myself stating the obvious again and again.

False perceptions of Islam and of Muslims serve to fuel the terrorists' agenda of a global struggle by polarizing and factionalizing societies East and West — each side stigmatizing the other and each side driven deeper into mistrust and intolerance. Muslims, a quarter of the world's population and citizens of every country, have a central role in the future of our planet. Muslim men and women bring the world a rich heritage of civic responsibility, justice, generosity, family life, and faith in God.

When some, out of prejudice or ignorance of what Islam is, seek to exclude Muslims from fulfilling their role, or on the other hand, when the outlaws of Islam, the khawarij, attempt to mislead some Muslims by deforming our religion through false teachings, our societies' future is put at risk. When the outlaws of Islams, the khawarij, murder, when they plunder, when they exploit children and reject the equality of women before God, they abuse Islam. When the khawarij persecute minorities, when they deny freedom of religion, they abuse Islam.

Islam teaches that all humanity is equal in dignity. There is no distinction among the various nations or

religions or races. The Quran forbids coercion in religion. Every citizen is guaranteed the State's protection for themselves, their families, their properties, their honour, their privacy, and their freedom of religion and thought. Muslims believe in the divine origins of the Bible and the Torah. God says in the Koran:

> "Say Ye: 'We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to the Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: and we submit to Allah.'" (*The Holy Koran, II:136*)

Indeed, the prophet mentioned most in the Koran is Moses, named 136 times. Jesus, whom we call "Christ Messiah," is named 25 times. His mother, Mary, called "best of all women in creation," is named 35 times, and there is a chapter in the Quran called Maryam. The khawarij deliberately hide these truths about Islam in order to drive Muslims and non-Muslims apart. We cannot allow that to happen. Once we understand that this is a battle that we must fight together — all religions and all of us who believe in the dignity, freedom, and well-being that is the birthright of every individual — then we can turn towards our common enemy and examine through a clear lens the unique nature of our foe.

Let me state clearly that those radical outlaw groups do not exist on the fringes of Islam. They are altogether outside of it. Thus, we refer to them as *khawarij*: outlaws of Islam. They declare the entire civilized world as the enemy and all people, military or civilian, as fair game. They aim to incubate satellite caliphates in every country of the world in order to extend their reach. They are also expanding fast and wide through their mastery and exploitation of modern technology, including social media. To confront this non-traditional enemy, we need non-traditional means, a new mindset, new partnerships and reformed methodologies. For Muslims, first and foremost this is a fight for our future. All elements of our community have a role to play, not only in mosques and religious centers, but media, schools, and communities. Let no one be misled: traditional Sunni Islam and all of its schools of jurisprudence decisively reject the ideas and claims of the takfiri jihadists. Muslims need to help identify and counter the outlaws of Islam who pick and choose and cut and paste religious texts in order to twist and distort true Islamic teaching.

The international community also faces a fight for the future. The war will not be fought on the battlefield alone. Our adversary has brought the fight to every place where humans live and interact: airports, cafes and city streets. Security cooperation is imperative, but equally important is a holistic approach. We need to open up new channels between continents and nations, within countries and among people. That means reforming the way we communicate, share information and use our technologies. The very same modern communication tools used against us must be employed by us, and we can do that while respecting the important issue of privacy. Creative innovators in the private sector, especially in the technology sector, are vital for our future and must be brought on board.

Ours is a global fight. The focus must not stop with the Middle East, but must reach far beyond into West and East Africa, South-East Asia and the Balkans. In Syria, a military approach will leave no winners, but only losers on every side and further civilian suffering. Ending violence ultimately demands a political process — one shepherded by a unified global vision and led by all of the Syrian people. In Iraq, international support remains critical as the Government and the people continue to uproot the khawarij. However, key to achieving and sustaining any success is an inclusive approach that engages all components of the country in the political process and in State institutions.

As we pursue those goals, the international community must also take responsibility for those whose lives have been crushed and who have been impoverished. I am referring to the millions of refugees and victims. We cannot decisively defeat the scourge of terror and violence without decisively rooting out the injustices that provide it with fertile ground. From the Abu Ghraib prison to the streets of Kabul and schools in Aleppo, injustice and humiliation have left tremendous human suffering in their wake.

No injustice has spread more bitter fruit than the denial of a Palestinian State. I believe that peace is a conscious decision. Israel has to embrace peace, or eventually be engulfed in a sea of hatred in a region of turmoil. Safeguarding Jerusalem is a key concern, as the Holy City is a strategic linchpin not only for my region but for the world.

That is a priority for me personally and for all Muslims. We utterly reject attacks on Muslim and Christian holy sites and any attempts to alter the historic

Muslim, Christian and Arab identity of the Holy City. As the Custodian of Islamic Holy Sites in Jerusalem, I will continue my efforts to protect those places and stand up against all violations of their sanctity, including attempts to establish temporal and spatial divisions restricting free use of the Al-Aqsa Mosque on Haram Al-Sharif.

Perhaps the central and most vital battleground for this defining war of our generation is the mind. The despicable, damaging ideology of hate, murder and self-destruction that is being spread in crash courses online and elsewhere must be confronted with a counter-narrative of hope, tolerance and peace. Together, in the General Assembly and in our regions, countries and communities across the world, we have the power to create that counter-narrative. Let us show that we also have the will to act.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the statement he has just made.

King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

Mr. Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Schneider-Ammann (*spoke in French*): On 26 July in Abu Dhabi, the Swiss solar-powered plane, Solar Impulse, finished its world tour. On the same day that the whole world commended that technical feat, the International Organization for Migration issued a statement saying that, since the beginning of 2016, more than 3,000 migrants had lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea. That shows us that once again humankind is capable of the best and the worst: excellence in innovation at the service of the environment, but also powerlessness and a certain inertia in the face of immense tragedy, born of dictatorship, poverty and warfare.

The challenges facing the international community are extensive. The situation in the Middle East and in certain regions of Africa, as well as at the gates of Europe, represent a tragic example of that. The weakening of States, economies and societies fosters the radicalization that can lead to terrorism and armed conflict, which bring with them their corollary victims — refugees and displaced persons. The consequences affect us all. Additional threats remain, such as natural disasters, climate change and its impacts and, indeed, antimicrobial resistance. Economic crises and the vicious cycle of unemployment, vulnerability and social exclusion that accompanies them are of concern to decision-makers around the world.

In the face of the scale of those challenges, a strong United Nations is more necessary than ever. The Organization has already proved what it is capable of. Its tireless efforts to mobilize the international community within the framework of various action plans have prolonged the all-important liberalization of the global economy. Over the past 20 years, the United Nations has helped to reduce extreme poverty rates by half and increase average life expectancy. Thanks to United Nations incentives, education for the world's populations has improved. The involvement of the private sector and civil society in global governance is constantly growing.

There is another signal of hope, namely, the recent peace agreement in Colombia. Switzerland, the depositary of the agreement, commends all the parties involved for that breakthrough on the road to lasting peace. Our generation is the first since the beginning of the twentieth century not to have lived through a world war. The United Nations has greatly contributed to that outcome, even if we must admit that there are still too many regional conflicts and that those conflicts have resulted in too many victims.

Because of its universality, the United Nations has a unique legitimacy, which gives rise to a monumental responsibility, with the number of its initiatives, agreements and processes constantly multiplying. A new global vision is taking shape, and all States are involved. Among the cornerstones of that vision is the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is the common framework for the development of sustainable solutions. It provides the basis for a renewed social contract between leaders and populations.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which seeks to limit global warming, is a strong sign of the commitment of States. The recent decision of the United States and China to ratify the Agreement is a very important step towards ensuring its success. The first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, which helped to develop solutions aimed at helping people affected by crises and disasters, is further evidence of international solidarity. Furthermore, the review of the United Nations peace and security architecture, which we recently completed, highlighted the importance of conflict prevention.

Finally, this year we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Human Rights Council, which has substantially contributed to the promotion and defence of human rights. A further step is now needed to strengthen the influence of its actions on the ground. The "Appeal of 13 June", launched by Switzerland and supported today by 70 States, rightly proposes to improve conflict-prevention activities by more systematically integrating the human rights dimension, including strengthening the links between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council.

In recent years, we have provided ourselves with valuable tools to build a better world; now it is time to use them. In that context, I would like to express our gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who, during a decade of hard work, has enabled the United Nations to make significant advances. We are convinced that his successor will continue the work and reform of the United Nations.

Our approach in this crucial phase must be based on principles that are dear to us, the Swiss, namely, the principles of inclusion and participation. I am convinced that by acting together we will succeed in meeting all the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Switzerland was one of the first countries to introduce national measures aimed at implementing the 2030 Agenda. We are determined to follow through on that commitment.

I hold the deep conviction that, in order to achieve the goals that we have set, we must have a sound economy. Promoting sustainable economic growth means making commitments that favour societies that offer equitable opportunities for all their members. A thriving economy is a primary objective, because it is a essential tool for creating opportunities for all citizens. A thriving economy makes it easier for young people, women and older workers to enter the labour market. I see that as absolutely consistent with the commitments undertaken by the United Nations. For a dynamic economy that provides jobs and opportunities is an important factor in preventing terrorist abuses and armed conflict.

In Switzerland, we have identified three key elements that enable us to regularly be at the forefront of innovation and competitiveness.

First, we have an effective training system that reflects the needs of the real economy as well as those of basic research. University courses and vocational programmes in Switzerland benefit from the same attention and the same care. Enterprise learning enriched by theoretical training in vocational schools plays a central role in the system.

Secondly, our liberal labour laws allow companies to evolve with the markets, participate in and contribute to technological progress and easily adopt innovative methods and products. The flexibility of our economy becomes the best guarantee of employment.

Thirdly, we have in place an effective and respected social partnership that ensures industrial peace. Regular negotiations between representatives of employers and employees ensure that labour agreements are flexible and accepted by all, and meet the needs of industries and regions.

But those key elements cannot produce positive effects without international trade. Exchanges stimulate competition, scientific and technological progress and innovation. And we should never forget that freedom expressed through democracy and framed by the rule of law is the best guarantee in ensuring that a company may realize its full economic, scientific and cultural potential.

It is also important to meet the challenges of globalization in the digital domain, not only in terms of transparency, data security and equal opportunities, but also from the perspective of the opportunities of technological, social, political and economic progress. In an open and democratic society, it is certainly vital that people be able to use digital technologies in informed and safe ways. However, we must also do everything possible to ensure that the new possibilities

offered by digitization facilitate access to employment rather than make employment more precarious.

It is easy to forecast that digitization will make jobs disappear. But that is not what matters; the real challenge is to identify the new jobs that it will create. For it is only by making that effort that we can put in place the training that will allow the greatest number of people to find jobs in tomorrow's world. In order succeed in that effort, we need to engage in dialogue with the most innovative companies. The United Nations and its specialized agencies can help ensure that all countries can take advantage of the opportunities offered by technological progress.

Speaking of the challenges facing the United Nations and the international community leads us naturally to Geneva as an international city. Switzerland is committed to prioritizing that city as a centre of global governance. We are supporting the modernization of the city's real estate, but we are also strengthening synergies between the various stakeholders in international Geneva, whether in the field of global health or of humanitarian action. There have been a number of initiatives in Geneva in recent months, namely, the Appeal of 13 June to Put Human Rights at the Heart of Conflict Prevention, the launch of a High-level Panel on Water and Peace, the organization of a conference on the prevention of violent extremism, and also various kinds of peace talks and negotiations. They are all evidence of the importance of Geneva as an international city and of Switzerland's commitment. It is a place that is useful for the world, and we will continue to commit to ensuring that its role is strengthened.

I am wholeheartedly convinced that the only viable responses to the contemporary challenges that we face are to be found in collective and solidarity-based solutions. To find such solutions, the international community needs a strong United Nations that is also modern and effective. That is the path we must take. Together, we must now support the Organization with vision and determination.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Swiss Confederation for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of the Republic of Peru

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Peru

Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of the Republic of Peru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kuczynski Godard (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address the General Assembly, to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, and to express Peru's willingness to contribute to the success of his stewardship.

Two months ago, when I began my term as President of the Republic of Peru, I expressed a commitment to the goals set forth by the founders of our Republic. In 2021, Peruvians will celebrate 200 years of our independent life, thereby consolidating a sound democracy, one that is socially functional and prosperous, with better opportunities for jobs and equality and where human rights are promoted. Our Government's plans and public policies coincide with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which are enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. They include access to water, education, health care for all Peruvians and other services that are vital in order to drastically reduce poverty, in the context of a full-scale battle against corruption, discrimination, insecurity and drug trafficking.

One key objective of my Government is to ensure the efficient management of safe water and sanitation for all. We will ensure access to drinking water and sewerage systems for all those families that do not now have such basic services, which accounts for about 10 million inhabitants, or almost a third of our people. We will make a significant investment that will prioritize the Amazon and Andean regions. We will work with non-traditional systems for potable water for non-urban areas, and we will implement systems for rainwater-harvesting in the Amazon and undertake public works through the reforestation programme known as "Blue Mountains", aimed at harvesting water

in the highlands of the Andean Mountains. I believe that interaction with the United Nations in that regard is a priority. I am therefore very honoured to have participated in the High-level Panel on Water just a few days ago.

Another very important issue for my Government is to promote green growth, while coordinating the use of land-based and marine ecosystems. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change should serve as an inspiration for us to implement those policies. Peru is a country that is particularly vulnerable, and we see that on a daily basis in the melting of our glaciers and in the extreme cold that occurs in southern Peru sometimes, both of which have compelled us to redirect our scarce resources to meet those challenges.

Peru is promoting such policies so as to become a member, as quickly as possible, of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. My Government's Administration has a clear vision of the new challenges and responsibilities that Peru must grapple with, which leads us to deepen our agreements with countries that have similar prospects, problems and challenges. They include our partners in the Pacific Alliance, namely, Colombia, Chile and Mexico. It would also include Brazil and Argentina, which are important neighbours, along with Ecuador. Together with them, we are tackling, in a harmonious and coordinated manner, the challenges of development in the twenty-first century.

Peru has a firm commitment to defending and definitively strengthening representative democracy, human rights and the rule of law. That commitment was clearly enshrined in the democratic Charter of the Organization of American States. In that context, fundamental freedoms, the right to participate freely in political life and the separation of, and respect for, the balance of powers are the cornerstones for the governability of our region and can ensure a future with hope.

We also respect the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, something that was established and introduced by the Latin American countries as a norm of international law a century ago. However, respect for that principle cannot, and should not, go against defence interests and the promotion of democracy and human rights, which consitute an irrevovable heritage for future generations.

In that context, it is imperative to mention our concern regarding the critical political, economic and social situation that our friends in Venezuela are currently experiencing. Full-fledged democracy requires absolute respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as due process. It also requires fully guaranteeing respect for the separation and balance of powers. The situation in Venezuela has been impacted by extreme violence, social and political confrontation and severe shortages of food and medicine. In order to address that multifaceted crisis, we call in solidarity for an internal political dialogue to begin as soon as possible, without conditions or restrictions and within a context of full respect for the Constitution. Peru is ready and willing to undertake all the necessary efforts that might assist our Venezuelan friends in bringing about a solution to their problems. We will work with the countries of the Pacific Alliance in that endeavour, especially with Venezuela's neighbouring country of Colombia, where we shall be in a few days to witness the signing of the peace agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia.

In conclusion, I would like to convey to the General Assembly that the Government that I lead in Peru is an advocate of modernization, compatible with the efforts promoted by the United Nations system, in a global, interdependent context, which has, however, unfortunately been affected by a series of grave conflicts that have been mentioned here today and throughout all of our debates.

Various parts of the world are experiencing a crisis of confidence, setbacks in globalization, populist and protectionist temptations and an almost unprecedented wave of refugees, as the King of Jordan mentioned a moment ago. Our aim in South America and Latin America is to create a bridge of stability and cooperation between the Pacific and the Atlantic that seeks to promote the gradual restoration of peace and prosperity in the western hemisphere.

Finally, I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on his decade of service to the international community in such an important role.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Peru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Erdoğan (*spoke in Turkish, interpretation provided by the delegation*): I greet the General Assembly on behalf of myself, my country and my nation with the utmost respect. I hope the seventy-first session of the General Assembly will succeed in its purposes and will lead to favourable results for all countries and nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, and I thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his work during his presidency during the previous session, while wishing him luck in his future endeavours.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his valuable contributions as he ends his 10-year tenure as Secretary-General, during which he served in a time of global challenges.

Within the first quarter of the twenty-first century, humankind has reached a peak in achievements in science, technology, economic development and health. However, such brilliance has also a very dark and disgraceful side. In Syria, in Iraq and in many countries suffering in the grip of terrorism and war, hundreds of thousands of women and children, the young and the elderly, are being killed. Refugees fleeing death, tyranny and oppression are, unfortunately, also facing degrading treatment in many European cities.

Terrorist organizations, such as Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front and the Democratic Union Party and Kurdish People's Protection Units, continue their attacks and actions in the region. There is also great potential for the disputes in the Caucasus region to unfold into a full-fledged conflict. Many problems, from Yemen to Ukraine, are of particular urgency, while peoples in countries throughout the world struggle with hunger, epidemics, poverty and illiteracy.

That is the disgraceful side of our world, damaging human dignity and disturbing the human conscience. What is even more distressing is that many of those crises and problems could easily be resolved. Peace, prosperity and security for future generations greatly depend on the steps and measures that we take today. Now is the moment to show leadership with a sense of responsibility in addressing the problems before us decisively.

Today, terrorist organizations are able to employ a variety of methods. On the night of 15 July, we in Turkey suffered a malicious coup attempt initiated by the Fethullah terrorist organization, also know as Fethull. That terrorist organization murdered 241 citizens and injured 2,194 people. Our Parliament building, the presidential complex and many security organizations and law-enforcement units were bombed by the terrorist organization, using F-16 fighter jets. Tanks rolled through the streets and over people. Helicopters and military vehicles opened fire on civilians. The coup attempt was successfully repelled by our nation, which heroically preserved its democracy, Government, freedoms and future and the constitutional order.

I therefore take pride in my nation's people, which defeated that heinous coup attempt at the risk of their lives. For a period of 29 days the people never abandoned the city squares of Turkey, remaining on call to protect our democracy. They threw their bodies in the way of tanks so as to repel the coup attempt. They took a very noble stand. If I am standing here before the Assembly today, it is because of our nation's brave and noble reaction. It should never be forgotten that the coup attempt in Turkey was aimed at democracy throughout the world as well. Our nation taught a historical lesson to those intending to carry out coup attempts and became a source of inspiration for all nations committed to protecting democracy.

The new generation of terrorist organizations poses a security threat, not only for Turkey but also for all 170 countries around the world in which such organizations exist. In other words, today the majority of the countries represented here in the General Assembly are currently under the threat of such clandestine structures. The terrorist organizations work on the premise of a deep-rooted psychological heresy aimed at subduing the whole world far beyond the borders of Turkey. The members are deviant in their actions. The basic

strategy of the terrorist organizations is to infiltrate State institutions, influencing society and dominating economic resources under the disguise of education, dialogue, tolerance, non-governmental organizations and the best of intentions.

From this rostrum, I would like to call on all our friends to take the necessary measures against the Fethullahist terrorist organization in their own countries in order to protect the future of their own people and their well-being. Based on our experience, it is evident that, if you do not fight against the Fethullahist terrorist organization now, tomorrow may be too late. I would also like to take this opportunity to say that attributions such as "Turkish" or "Turkey" and all other similar labels used by that terrorist organization and the persons associated with it have no relation with Turkey.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria has reached its sixth year. To date, 600,000 people have reportedly lost their lives, and, because of the war, 12 million people have had to leave their country, 5 million of whom have taken refuge in other countries. There are now 2.7 million such people in our country. They were forced to leave their homes behind and have been welcomed in Turkey. We have never asked why they ended up in Turkey. Our doors are wide open. We have not shut our doors in their faces, because they were fleeing barrel bombs and fighter jets. For those people, we have had to assume our responsibilities and do what was expected of us.

While the West and the rest of the world might not do so, we will continue to welcome them, because we are human beings. In the face of such an atrocity, we are obliged to keep our doors open to all those fleeing tyranny and oppression. We have opened our doors and kept them open. And we will continue to open our doors in the future. The international community has, unfortunately, remained indifferent to the suffering of people in conflict zones. The numbers that we have mentioned correspond to human beings.

The Syrian people are in a state of exhaustion in the grip of proxy wars that have been shaped by a cruel Administration, merciless terrorist organizations and global and regional competition. In that process, unfortunately, the international community has failed to live up to its humanitarian values and its collective conscience.

To date, Turkey has spent approximately $25 billion on the refugees, including money directed to non-governmental organizations and municipalities. Members might ask: what has Turkey received from the rest of the world? From the United Nations, we have received only $525 million in aid and nothing else. Have we received anything from the European Union (EU)? The EU made certain promises, which have, unfortunately, not been kept. It has allocated $178 million to UNICEF. That is all. Turkey itself has not directly received any aid whatsoever in financial terms.

Since the beginning of the conflict, we have claimed that the problem was a common question for the rest of the world. We have been establishing close contacts in solidarity with influential international figures. The Syrians are our neighbours and brothers and sisters. We could not remain silent in the face of such tragedy and carnage. We have never remained silent and never will. Currently, 2.7 million refugees are being housed in our country, along with 300,000 Iraqis. A total number of 3 million refugees have never been subjected to any ethnic or religious discrimination in Turkey. We have opened our arms wide.

In addition to the tent and container cities in which we accommodate the refugees in Turkey, we will continue to provide all forms of support commensurate with our capabilities. We expect the EU and all other organizations that have pledged financial support to rise to the occasion. We expect them to keep their promises. Similarly, we expect the United Nations to keep its promises. I hope and pray that the General Assembly at its seventy-first session will loudly convey that message to the rest of the world, because the contributions of the international community should not be limited $512 million s. What is one to think?

From this rostrum, I call upon the rest of the world, including my European friends who believe that the Syrian refugees represent a threat and clear danger to them. Barbed wire and high walls will never provide them with the safety, security or peace of mind that they are seeking. That effort is in vain. The problems of the Syrian refugees should be immediately solved once and for all. Otherwise, we will never be able to prevent the irregular migration, social issues and security risks embedded within that problem. We must not lose any more time in ending the conflict, the terrorism and the environment of persecution, which are the sources of the problem in Syria. We must urgently implement a political settlement process.

We attach great importance to protecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have no claims whatsoever on Syrian territory. Syria belongs to the Syrian people. No one should ever have any plans whatsoever with regard to the territory of Syria.

Starting with our support for the Syrian opposition, what is known as Operation Euphrates Shield was launched, which is critical to re-establishing stability, peace and prosperity in a region of despair. It became clear that, with the launching of that operation, the priority of the terrorist organization Kurdish Workers Party, or of the Kurdish Democratic Party, is in not fighting against Da'esh. The operation — or offensive, as some prefer to call it — has also boosted the self-confidence of the moderate Syrian opposition forces. Furthermore, that development has provided encouragement to the local forces in Iraq that are eager to cleanse Mosul of the terror sowed by Da'esh.

As those who are present here are probably aware, for a long time I have appealed for the establishment of a safe zone along our border with Syria, which at more than 900 kilometres is the longest border with Syria. Along that border, Turkey has been continuously under threat. We have been extremely patient. However, on 24 August, in the city of Gaziantep, next to the Syrian border, a wedding party was attacked by a 14-year-old suicide bomber, a boy sent there by Da'esh terrorists. The blast killed 56 people and injured more than 100. We were patient until that critical moment. That was the precise time when we said, enough is enough.

Along with the moderate opposition, we initiated the offensive. Primarily in Jarabulus, we have eliminated Da'esh and extended operations all the way to Al-Rai, where Da'esh was repelled. The local inhabitants of Jarabulus were resettled, as were those from Al-Rai. From A'zaz to the Euphrates, the entire region was saved from becoming a belt of terrorism. Instead, it was converted into a belt of peace. The operation we are conducting today has the eventual goal of protecting that safe zone and ensuring that it is in fact safe.

The people of Jarabulus were saved from the grip of the terrorists and are confident in returning to their homes. The electrical and water infrastructure will be made operational immediately. The Turkish Red Crescent, Turkish humanitarian aid organizations and all of the other non-governmental organizations have mobilized to meet the needs of the local inhabitants. All of the civil facilities needed by the local inhabitants will be constructed in the near future. In order to make that possible, the areas officially designated as safe zones should also be declared as no-fly zones. We must maintain a firm stand so as to ensure that a no-fly zone will be established for the protection and security of the region's inhabitants.

It is unfortunate that the ceasefire, a process that has received enormous investment, has failed. As is clear, a ceasefire is no longer possible. Yesterday, a United Nations convoy was attacked by the regime's forces, resulting in the death of one person and many others injured.

The Syrian regime has not allowed aid deliveries supervised by the United Nations to reach the people of Aleppo, who are in dire need. They are also attacking United Nations convoys. The regime is condemning people to famine and suffering, in order to encourage them to surrender or to die. The United Nations and the Security Council should no longer tolerate the regime's policies.

In Iraq it is clear that it will not be easy to establish a political system to effectively protect its ethnic and sectarian diversity, which makes up the greatest underlying strength of the country. Within that context, the Mosul operation should be conducted by taking into consideration the sensitivities of the people of the region. Otherwise, a new humanitarian crisis will emerge, leading to the influx of yet another 1 million people seeking refuge in other countries. We cannot leave the Iraqi people alone at this critical juncture, when they need the support of the international community now more than ever.

Allowing the Palestinian people to live in an independent Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the two-State solution, is an obligation of the international community to Palestinian children, if nothing else. Israel, especially, should respect the sanctity of the Temple Mount and put an end to violations of its status.

We will try to benefit from our normalized relations with Israel to facilitate the peace process and resolve the economic and humanitarian challenges faced by our Palestinian brothers and sisters through every possible effort. In that vein, we will continue our efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip.

That brings me to a very important point. The World Humanitarian Summit was held in May, in Turkey, for

the first time in history. We consider that Summit to have provided an important opportunity to explore new ways of more effective crisis intervention around the world. In that connection, I would like to be clear in my remarks. With respect to providing support to the least developed countries around the world, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States rank among the top three donors. But in the ratio comparing the amount of humanitarian aid to gross domestic product, Turkey is ranked number one in the world.

We are the country housing the most significant number of refugees around the world, and we are doing everything within our ability to stop irregular migration. Upon Turkey's initiative, the subject of Syrian refugees was addressed by the General Assembly last year for the first time. Similarly, migration and terrorism were incorporated into the Group of 20 agenda, thanks to Turkey's efforts. We are cooperating with the European Union on the refugee crisis to the greatest extent possible.

Based on the goal of preventing deaths in the Aegean Sea, we have succeeded in reducing the irregular migration number to 50 people per day; whereas, in October 2015, that number had reached 7,000 per day. That shows that Turkey has successfully fulfilled its commitments under the framework of the refugee agreement with the EU. However, we regret that the promises made by the EU in the context of the agreement of 18 March have been forgotten, while ongoing false pretexts prevail and excuses are all that we hear.

The Security Council must be reformed to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We fully appreciate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's progress in that respect. Furthermore, it is obvious that, unless the Security Council, as the main organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is reformed, such efforts will be in vain and the task will remain unfulfilled.

That is why we say that the world is greater than the five permanent members. We have been reminding the international community of that fact over and over again with every chance we get. The Security Council was established in the aftermath of the Second World War. One cannot preserve the same structure of the Council under the circumstances of modern times. One cannot condemn the fate of the rest of the world to depend on what the five permanent members in the Security Council say. There are five permanent seat-holders and 10 non-permanent seat-holders in the Security Council. That is not a proper Security Council. A Council that does not represent the entire world can never serve to re-establish peace and justice around the world. That is something that we need to revisit over and over again. Can everyone think about that — three European countries, one country in Asia and one country, the United States of America, of course — five countries as the permanent seat-holders? What about the rest of the world? What about the other countries around the world? They have remained on the sidelines. We ignore them.

Instead, why not have 20 countries as permanent seat-holders in the Security Council, under a rotational system? In that system, each country would, deservedly, be represented on the Security Council every year or every two years. That is the only way to establish fairness and justice. The representative nature of the Security Council should be established so that the organ will be much more effective, more just.

In order for that to be possible, the General Assembly has to reach complete consensus. Please do not even consider remaining silent, or else we cannot achieve anything. We cannot succeed in our policies. We have to engage in spying, so to say. We have to be strong. We have to stand on our two feet, and talk about the truth and nothing but the truth. We have to stand behind the truth. We are the politicians. Only in that way can the world attain the level of justice that it yearns for. This is the only way to achieve democracy.

Islamophobia is an alternate name for racism and discrimination. We see it prevailing in countries with a large Muslim population. About a decade ago, along with the then Prime Minister of Spain, we co-chaired the initiative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations project that aimed to find permanent solutions to such dangerous movements that threaten our prosperity around the world. Similarly, we are also glad that interest in the Mediation for Peace Initiative that we pioneered along with Finland in 2010 under the auspices of the United Nations has increased.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which we have jointly developed, includes ambitious and transformative goals for us all. Official development assistance makes up the most important resource for supporting development efforts, notably for the least developed countries (LDCs). Turkey's official

development assistance reached $3.9 billion in 2015. As I have previously mentioned, the 0.54 per cent of our gross domestic product, which is the ratio of humanitarian aid that we provide, is beyond the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development average and helps us approach the United Nations target, which is 0.7 per cent. Turkey has surpassed its commitment to provide $200 million annually to LDCs in 2011, and has delivered more than $1.5 billion to LDCs in a mere five-year period.

Before concluding my remarks, I hope and pray that the seventy-first session of the General Assembly will be the beginning of a new age to alleviate the pain and suffering of people around the world, and that it will help us change our world.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Turkey for the statement he has just made.

His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President took the Chair.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji.

Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Bainimarama (Fiji): This is a special moment for Fiji as you, Sir, assume the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session — the first Fijian and the first Pacific Islander to attain this high Office at the United Nations. Your nation is honoured and proud. On behalf of every Fijian, I offer you, Mr. President, my warmest congratulations and wish you every success as you guide our deliberations over the next 12 months.

I want to thank those nations that supported Fiji's bid for the presidency, including our neighbours and friends among the Pacific small island developing States. I also thank Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark for his leadership during the seventieth session.

Fiji fully supports the agenda that you, Sir, have outlined for the coming session, which seeks to persuade the world to begin implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals that the 193 Member States adopted last year. As you rightly stated, Sir, when you took your oath of office last week, the seventy-first session must, for integrity's sake, be the year that we witness the wheels turning. We have collectively pledged to mobilize the global community to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change. And we have pledged that, as we do so, we will leave no one behind, wherever they live on the planet. That is our promise to the 7.5 billion people across the world, whose interests we represent. It is a promise that must be kept — a "universal push to transform our world", as the theme of this session puts it.

A centrepiece of the seventy-first session and one of our most critical priorities is the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, which is to be held in New York next June on the theme "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development". Fiji is proud to be co-hosting that gathering with Sweden, and I ask everyone to give that initiative their full support. The world must act quickly and decisively to reverse the environmental degradation of our oceans and seas, and the reckless and irresponsible use of those precious resources.

For a small island developing State such as Fiji, that is as pressing as the need to address the challenges of climate change and deal with the extreme weather events and rising seas that pose such a threat to our way of life in the small island developing States and other vulnerable parts of the world. Many millions of people in maritime and coastal communities the world over are looking to us for decisive action to address the growing crisis of population, pollution, overfishing and the loss of marine habitats.We must not fail them.

Fiji also comes to the seventy-first session with a plea to all nations that have yet to do so to ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We are proud to have been the first nation in the world to ratify the Agreement and launch the ratification instruments. But we also come with the message that Paris must be merely the first step. We are alarmed by scientific

predictions that the 2°C cap on global warming over pre-industrial levels agreed to in Paris is not enough to save us.

Seven months ago, the Fijian people were given a terrifying glimpse into the future that the experts say awaits us when we were struck by the biggest tropical cyclone ever to make landfall in the southern hemisphere, Cyclone Winston. Packing winds of more than 300 kilometres an hour, it killed 44 of our people and left many thousands homeless. Mercifully, it spared our main tourism areas — our principal source of income — so our wider community and our wider economy remained intact. But if this is what awaits us as global warming triggers weather events that are more frequent and more extreme, then God help us.

In common with other small island developing States, we face a nightmare scenario in which a single event scoring a direct hit could wipe out our economy, set us back for decades and make it impossible for us to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Our message from the Pacific therefore is this: the 2°C cap is not enough. We need the world to go one better and embrace the 1.5°C cap that we, members of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, called for in the Suva Declaration on Sustainable Human Development in the Pacific.

We also need deeper cuts in carbon emissions and more decisive global action than what we are currently witnessing. But as a first step, I appeal to all Member States to ratify the Paris Agreement and to turn away from what I have termed "the coalition of the selfish" — those countries that would see vulnerable nations battered and submerged rather than alter their pampered, carbon-driven lifestyles.

I am proud to report that Fiji is heeding the President's call to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. First and foremost, we have placed sustainable development at the core of our national agenda. The Green Growth Framework for Fiji, which I launched in 2015, is a blueprint for the future direction of our nation. It has been incorporated into our new five-year and 20-year national development plans that we will be unveiling in the coming months. These plans stipulate that no development whatsoever in Fiji will be permitted unless it can be conclusively demonstrated to be sustainable. We regard the preservation of our natural environment on land and at sea as our number-one priority. We are willing to make sacrifices to fulfil our solemn duty to the Fijian people to preserve their surroundings.

Article 40, paragraph 1, of our Constitution gives every Fijian the right to

> "a clean and healthy environment, which includes the right to have the natural world protected for the benefit of present and future generations".

I make a solemn pledge to my own people and to the wider global community that, while my Government remains in office, Fiji will never be among the ranks of those nations that have compromised their futures for short-term financial gain. We intend to raise our living standards by other means, especially by making things that other people want to buy and by providing services they want to access. We are taking the Fijian-made brand of quality products and services to the four corners of the Earth and managing our economy responsibly in accordance with international best practices, with a particular emphasis on infrastructure development, service delivery and providing for the less fortunate.

Of prime importance is our education revolution, by which we are equipping Fijian young people with the knowledge and skills to have satisfying, sustainable livelihoods and contribute to our nation's progress. We are providing free schooling for the first time and have established our first tertiary loan scheme and more scholarships for gifted students in order to open up a gateway of unprecedented opportunity to our universities and a new network of technical colleges. We have set our sights higher than ever before to become a smarter, more dynamic country at the hub of the Pacific, the crossroads of our region, and to evolve into a modern nation State that is a beacon to our neighbours and respected around the world.

I am pleased to report that we have made a strong start as a nation on the long but determined journey to achieve that goal. Not only are our people being given more opportunity than at any time in our history, not only are we creating a more equitable society, which includes targeted assistance for the vulnerable and the country's first pension scheme, but Fiji is also currently experiencing a record period of economic growth, with seven straight years of expansion.

Even in the wake of Cyclone Winston, we expect to see growth of nearly 3 per cent this year. Our message to the world is simple: Fiji is open for business. Fiji

has attractive incentives for investment and some of the most favourable corporate and personal tax rates in the Pacific region. We have state-of-the-art communications and an educated, English-speaking work force. We are investing in new roads, airports and other infrastructure and have dramatically improved the efficiency of our ports. We also have our pristine environment, spectacular islands, coastlines and waters. In addition, our standard of hospitality has made the Fijian people famous the world over.

We market ourselves to the world as a holiday destination with the slogan "Fiji — where happiness finds you". Whatever the challenges of Cyclone Winston, I can confidently say that the Fijian people have never been happier. The joy that erupted when our world-champion rugby sevens team won the gold medal at the Rio Olympics was shared by every Fijian. It has brought us together in celebration and seen us more unified in recent weeks than at any other time in our history. It has also inspired us to imagine what else our small nation can do if we put our minds to it.

As many in the Assembly are aware, we have had considerable challenges through the years in forging a common identity and producing an equal and just society for every citizen, but I am here to say that those days are over. As Fiji approaches its first half-century as an independent nation in 2020, we are finally one nation, one people, with a great sense of national optimism and a great deal to look forward to.

To reflect our new-found confidence, we are also in the process of re-evaluating our relationships with the rest of the world. Last week, I assumed the position of Foreign Minister as well as Prime Minister, and I intend to steadily reform this Ministry and to refine certain aspects of our foreign policy to give it a new direction and a renewed sense of purpose.

First and foremost, we are going to place trade at the centre of our foreign-policy effort, with the promotion of the impressive collection of quality products and services under the Fijian-made brand. Some of these products and services are already making a global impact, but we believe we can do a lot more — whether it is our water, our cosmetics, foodstuffs and other manufactured goods, the more efficient marketing of Fiji as a prime holiday destination, or by spreading the wings of our boutique national airline, Fiji Airways, flying to other destinations in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

We intend to immediately boost the level of collaboration between our Foreign Ministry and our Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, which have too often operated in isolation. Our diplomats and trade commissioners will be instructed to make it a priority to work more closely with Fijian exporters to promote the Fijian-made brand, as well as to access goods and services of international standards from new and old trading partners that benefit Fijian consumers.

More broadly, we are rethinking some of our foreign policy positions and objectives. This includes a re-evaluation of the central principle of Fijian foreign policy for some years of being "friends to all and enemies to none".

Of course, we seek friendly relations with all nations and are certainly not in the business of making enemies. But we intend, in future, to choose our friends in a more discerning manner and to align ourselves more closely with those countries that share our underlying values and principles. These include, above all, adherence to international law and adherence to human rights and human dignity, along with other shared values such as mutual respect, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the resolving of disputes by peaceful means and non-interference in one another's internal affairs.

This change of direction will not be sudden. It is certainly not going to produce a dramatic change in the international company that Fiji keeps. But we are definitely seeking closer relations with nations that share our values and basic outlook, especially those nations that respect human life and the rights and dignity of their citizens, adhere to the principle of social justice, uphold the rule of law and insist on equality and respect for all human beings, as we in Fiji do.

As part of our wider commitment to human rights, we are seeking membership in the Human Rights Council for the two-year term that commences in 2018. We would be the first Pacific nation to serve on the Council, and I ask all member States to support our bid.

Fiji will continue to play a disproportionate role in the international community in relation to its size, whether it be our continuing commitment to United Nations peacekeeping and sending our men and women in uniform to protect ordinary people in troubled parts of the world, or our lead role in drawing global attention to the urgent need for action on climate change.

It is certainly a proud moment for me, as the leader of our small nation, to stand here before the nations of the world with you, Sir, behind me, as President of the General Assembly. Congratulations again on your appointment. I thank you for bringing such honour to our nation. Every Fijian — indeed, the entire community of nations — wishes you well as you preside over the deliberations of this seventy-first session and the great issues of our time on which the future of the world depends.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. May (United Kingdom): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly for the first time and to do so as Prime Minister of a country that has always been a proud and proactive member at the very heart of the United Nations.

The United Nations was formed because leaders across the world knew that they could deliver security for their citizens at home only if they could cooperate as a community of nations to deliver security across the globe. Some of the threats that we face together today are familiar to those founding leaders: war, political instability, abuses of human rights and poverty. Others are new: global terrorism, climate change and unprecedented mass movements of people.

We gather here today because we know that such challenges do not respect the borders of our individual nations and that only by working together shall we overcome them. As a new Prime Minister to the United Kingdom, my pledge to the United Nations is simple. The United Kingdom will be a confident, strong and dependable partner internationally, true to the universal values that we share together. We will continue to honour our commitment to spend 0.7 of our gross national income on development, building on the achievements that we have already made to reduce poverty, deal with instability and increase prosperity the world over, and we will drive forward the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We will continue to champion the rights of women and girls, making sure that all girls get the education they deserve and tackling horrific abuses such as female genital mutilation and the use of sexual violence in conflict. We will continue to be a steadfast permanent member of the Security Council, meeting our NATO commitment to spend 2 per cent of gross domestic product on defence and making a leading contribution to United Nations peacekeeping efforts, where we have doubled our commitment, including new deployments to Somalia and South Sudan.

We will continue to stand up for the rules-based international system and for international law, and I join other leaders in condemning the outrageous bombing of the aid convoy in Syria yesterday. We will continue to play our part in the international effort against climate change, and, in a demonstration of our commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the United Kingdom will start its domestic procedures to enable ratification of the Paris Agreement and complete these before the end of the year. And we will continue to strengthen our existing partnerships, from the United Nations to the Commonwealth and to NATO, seeking to resolve conflict in countries across the world, from Colombia and Cyprus to Somalia and Yemen.

But we must never forget that we stand here at the United Nations as servants of the men and women that we represent back at home. As we do so, we must recognize that for too many of these men and women, the increasing pace of globalization has left them feeling left behind. The challenge for those of us in this Hall is to ensure that our Governments and our global institutions such as the United Nations remain responsive to the people we serve, and that we are capable of adapting our institutions to the demands of the twenty-first century and of ensuring that they do not become irrelevant.

So when it comes the big security and human rights challenges of our time, we need this, our United

Nations, to forge a bold new multilateralism, because, as we have seen even in the past week, no country is untouched by the threat of global terrorism, and when extremists anywhere in the world can transmit their poisonous ideologies directly into the bedrooms of people vulnerable to radicalization, we need not just work together to prevent conflict and instability in nation States, but to act globally to disrupt the networks that terrorist groups use to finance operations and recruit to their ranks.

When we see the mass displacement of people on a scale unprecedented in recent history, we must ensure that we are implementing the policies that are fit for the challenges we face today. And when criminal gangs do not respect our national borders, trafficking our fellow citizens into lives of slavery and servitude, we cannot let those borders act as a barrier to bringing such criminals to justice.

In each of these areas, it is the convening power of our United Nations that gives us a unique opportunity to respond. But we can do so only if we modernize and adapt to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

As a United Nations we have shown how we can work together to reduce the threat of international terrorism by preventing conflict and instability from developing. For example, as a permanent member of the Security Council, Britain has played a leading role in the fight against Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Since 2010, with huge support from across the region and, critically, the commitment of Somalis themselves, Al-Shabaab has been driven from all the major cities it used to control.

It is vital that as an international community we continue to support countries in the region that are contributing thousands of troops, and that we continue to build the capacity of Somali security forces. That is why the United Kingdom is now going to increase further our security support, and we will be calling on others to do the same, hosting an international conference on Somalia in 2017, to maintain this vital momentum. Missions like this must remain central to the work of the United Nations, but on their own they are not enough, because the terrorist threats we face today do not come from one country but rather exist in a different space. The global networks they exploit require a different kind of global response.

These organizations are using our own modern banking networks against us. We therefore need to look at our regulations and information-sharing and use our technological capabilities to get ahead of them. They are targeting our airlines, exploiting the fact that no one country can keep its citizens safe when they are flying between multiple jurisdictions. That is why this week the United Nations will vote on a United Kingdom-led draft resolution on aviation security so that every country implements the standards we need to ensure that no country is the weak link.

They are exploiting the Internet and social media to spread an ideology that is recruiting people to their cause all over the world. We therefore need to tackle this ideology head-on. That is why the United Kingdom has championed the work that the Secretary-General has led to develop a strategy for preventing violent extremism. Now, as an international community, we must work together to adopt and implement the most comprehensive national action plans to tackle both the causes and the symptoms of all extremism. It is not enough merely to focus on violent extremism. We need to address the whole spectrum of extremism — violent extremism and non-violent extremism, Islamist and neo-Nazi, hate and fear in all their forms.

Just as we need the United Nations to modernize to meet the challenges of terrorism in the twenty-first century, so too must we adapt if we are to fashion a truly global response to the mass movements of people across the world and its implications for security and human rights. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol must remain the bedrock of our response, but the context in which they must be applied has dramatically changed.

Across the world today, there are 65 million people who have been forcibly displaced. That is the equivalent of the entire population of the United Kingdom. It is an unprecedented figure, one that has almost doubled in a decade. And yet United Nations appeals are underfunded, host countries are not getting enough support and refugees are not getting the aid, education and economic opportunities they need. We must do more. As the second-largest bilateral provider of assistance, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to playing a leading role.

In the past five years, the United Kingdom has invested over $9 billion in humanitarian assistance, saving millions of lives every year. The London Conference on Syria in February raised $12 billion in pledges, the largest amount ever raised in one day in response to a humanitarian crisis. And that money

is being used to combine both urgent humanitarian assistance and vital economic development, benefiting both refugees and the communities and countries hosting them. Clearly, we need to continue our efforts to bring an end to the conflict and the appalling slaughter in Syria and to get aid through to those who need it.

While these efforts continue inside Syria, we also need new efforts to support refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries, including through education and opportunities to work. These efforts are complemented by loans from international financial institutions and access to European markets. Through our trading relationships and direct engagement with businesses, we are mobilizing the private sector to create new jobs in the region for everyone. While there is more to be done, it is this approach to financing both humanitarian support and economic development that I will be championing when I announce a further United Kingdom financial contribution at President Obama's leaders' summit on the global refugee crisis later today.

But in addition to refugees and displaced people fleeing conflict and persecution, we are also seeing an unprecedented movement of people in search of greater economic opportunities through the same unmanaged channels. That affects all of us, and it is the responsibility of us all to take action. We cannot ignore the challenge or allow it to continue unmanaged. We need to do better — for the countries people leave, for the countries they move through, for the countries they try to get to — and most of all, better for the migrants and refugees themselves.

Despite the huge increase in international efforts, more migrants have died attempting hazardous journeys across borders this year than any other. I believe we have to use the opportunity afforded by this session of the General Assembly for an honest global debate to address this global challenge.

In doing so, we should be clear that there is nothing wrong with the desire to migrate for a better life and that controlled, legal, safe, economic migration brings benefits to our economies. But countries have to be able to exercise control over their borders. The failure to do so erodes public confidence, fuels international crime, damages economies and reduces the resources for those who genuinely need protection and whose rights under the Refugee Convention should always be fulfilled. I believe there are three fundamental principles that we now need to establish at the heart of a new approach to managing migration that is in the interests of all those involved.

First of all, we must help ensure that refugees claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. The current trend of onward movements, where refugees reach a safe country but then press on with their journey, can only benefit criminal gangs and expose refugees to grave danger. We must therefore all do more to support countries where the refugees first arrive, to provide the necessary protection and assistance for refugees safely and swiftly and to help countries adapt to the huge economic impact that refugees can have — including on their existing population.

As we are seeing in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, when the right assistance is provided, solutions that provide sanctuary and opportunity to refugees, and opportunities for those hosting them, can be found. This is also good for the refugees and the countries they come from — because the closer they stay to home, the easier it will be for them to return and rebuild after the conflict.

Secondly, we need to improve the ways we distinguish between refugees fleeing persecution and economic migrants. I believe we must ensure that the existing Convention and Protocol are properly applied to provide protection to refugees and reduce the incentives for economic migrants to use illegal routes. This in turn will help us target support for those refugees who need it most and retain the support of our populations for doing so.

Thirdly, we need a better overall approach to managing economic migration — one that recognizes that all countries have the right to control their borders — and that we must all commit to accepting the return of our own nationals when they have no right to remain elsewhere. By ensuring a managed and controlled international migration response while simultaneously investing to tackle the underlying drivers of displacement and migration at source, we can reject isolationism and xenophobia, thereby achieving better outcomes for all of our citizens, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Finally, as we gather here today to bring the founding values of the United Nations to bear on some of the most pressing global problems, the likes of which we have never seen before, we must also face up to the fact that some of the worst human rights abuses, which we thought we had consigned to the history

books, have re-emerged in new, pernicious forms. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the General Assembly, stated that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, that no one should be held in slavery and servitude and that slavery and the slave trade should be prohibited in all their forms. Yet, nearly 70 years on, we are presented with a new form of slavery — modern slavery. Organized crime groups, which are largely behind this modern slavery, lure, dupe and force innocent men, women and children into extreme forms of exploitation. Trafficked and sold across borders, victims are forced into living the kind of inhumane existence that is almost too much for our imagination.

Such criminals have global networks to help them make money out of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Victims are held captive in squalid conditions, under the constant shadow of violence and forced into sex and labour exploitation. If we are going to succeed in stamping out this abhorrent crime and bring the perpetrators to justice, we need to confront the reality of what were are dealing with. These organized-crime groups work across borders and jurisdictions. They often use the Internet and modern technology to recruit, transport, control and exploit their victims, all the while staying ahead of legal systems that are often constrained by traditional geographical boundaries.

We must therefore take action. We must use our international law-enforcement networks to track down these criminals wherever they are in the world and put them behind bars, where they belong. We need to be smarter and even more coordinated than the criminal gangs in our efforts to stop them. In the United Kingdom, I am setting up the first-ever Government task force for modern slavery, bringing together every relevant department to coordinate and drive all our efforts in the battle against this cruel exploitation. We are also using our aid budget to create a dedicated fund focused on high-risk countries where we know victims are regularly trafficked to the United Kingdom. Yesterday, I committed the first £5 million from that fund to work in Nigeria, to reduce the vulnerability of potential victims and step up the fight against those who seek to profit from this crime.

But if we are to meet the Sustainable Development Goal to eradicate modern slavery, we need to go much further. Security relationships have developed between many countries for dealing with such issues as counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, drug trafficking and wider intelligence-sharing, but we do not have a similar relationship for the fight against modern slavery. We therefore need our law-enforcement agencies to work together, with joint investigation teams working across multiple countries. Victims will find freedom only if we cultivate a radically new, global and coordinated approach to defeating this vile crime. Together, we must work tirelessly to preserve the freedoms and values that have defined our United Nations from its inception. Together, we must work tirelessly to restore these freedoms and values to the lives of the men, women and children who are exploited for profit and held captive with little or no chance of escape.

From the Declaration of St. James's Palace and the Atlantic Charter forged by Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt to the first meeting of the General Assembly in London in 1946, the United Kingdom has always been an outward-looking, global partner at the heart of international efforts to secure peace and prosperity for all our peoples. And that is how we will remain. For when the British people voted to leave the European Union, they did not vote to turn inwards or walk away from any of our partners in the world. Faced with challenges like migration, a desire for greater control of their country and a mounting sense that globalization is leaving working people behind, they demanded a politics that is more in touch with their concerns and bold action to address them.

But that action must be more global, not less, because the biggest threats to our prosperity and security do not recognize or respect international borders. And if we focus only on what we do at home, the job is barely half done. This is not the time to turn away from our United Nations. It is the time to turn towards it. Only we, as members of this community of nations, can act to ensure that this great institution becomes as relevant for our future as it has been in our past.

Let us therefore come together, true to our founding values but responsive to the challenges of today, and let us work together to build a safer, more prosperous and more humane world for generations to come.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Trudeau (Canada): It is an honour to be present at the General Assembly today. It is wonderful to be here in the great city of New York. Once again this week, New Yorkers showed us how to be resilient and resolute in the face of violent extremism. On behalf of everyone in this Hall, let me directly say to the people of New York that they are a model to the rest of the world, and we thank them.

Exactly one year ago, Canada was in the middle of a long — 78 days on the road, and I can assure the Assembly that, in Canada, there are 78 days' worth of roads — and closely fought election campaign. It is the responsibility of a leader to spend time with the people they are elected to serve. To get the real stories, it is important to go where people live: coffee shops and church basements, mosques and synagogues, farmers' markets and public parks. It was in those places that I got the best sense of what Canadians were thinking and how they were doing and, through the politeness — because we Canadians are always polite even when we are complaining — I learned a few things.

I talked with people my age who were trying to be hopeful about their future but found it tough to make ends meet, even when they were working full-time. I heard from young Canadians who were frustrated, who told me that they could not get a job because they do not have work experience but they cannot get work experience because they do not have a job. I heard from women and girls who still face inequality in the workplace and violence just because they are women, even in a progressive country like Canada.

(*spoke in French*)

I met parents who were working hard to give their children every opportunity to succeed but who feared that their efforts would not be sufficient. I had the chance share a meal with elderly retirees who had toiled all their lives but who now have to go to food banks. Over the past few years, I have had far too many disturbing conversations with Canadians, but they made something clear to me. Canadians still believe in progress, or, at least, that progress is possible. But that optimism is mixed with great concern. It is clear that Canadians are not the only ones who feel that way; those feelings are present everywhere. That anxiety is a fact of life.

(*spoke in English*)

When leaders are faced with citizens' anxiety, we have a choice to make. Do we exploit that anxiety or do we allay it? Exploiting it is easy, but in order to allay it we need to be prepared to answer some very direct questions. What will create the good, well-paying jobs that people want and need and deserve? What will strengthen and grow the middle class and help those working hard to join it? What will build an economy that works for everyone? What will help to make the world a safer, more peaceful place?

To allay people's anxiety, we need to create economic growth that is broadly shared, because a fair and successful world is a peaceful one. We need to focus on what brings us together, not on what divides us. For Canada, that means re-engaging in global affairs through institutions like the United Nations. It does not serve our interests — or the world's — to pretend that we are not deeply affected by what happens beyond our borders.

(*spoke in French*)

Earlier this year, we helped negotiate the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. As part of our commitment to implementing that Agreement, we announced that Canada would invest $2.65 billion over five years to fund clean, low-carbon growth in developing countries. In order to help promote peace and security in areas affected by instability, we reaffirmed our support for NATO and committed ourselves to expanding Canada's role in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We hosted the fifth Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, where we increased our contribution by 20 per cent by giving more than $800 million to the Global Fund. We also encouraged our partners to increase their contributions, making it possible to raise $13 billion in support of ending AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria by 2030.

(*spoke in English*)

We have done all this — and will do much more — because we believe we should confront anxiety with a clear plan to deal with its root causes. We believe we should bring people together around shared purposes such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. What is the alternative? Is it to exploit anxiety? Is it to turn it into fear and blame? Is it to reject others because they look or speak or pray differently than we do?

In Canada we got a very important thing right — not perfect, but right. In Canada, we see diversity as a source of strength, not weakness. Our country is strong not in spite of our differences, but because of them. We must make no mistake: we have had many failures, from the internment of Ukrainian, Japanese and Italian Canadians during the World Wars, to our turning away of boats of Jewish and Punjabi refugees, to the shamefully continuing marginalization of indigenous peoples. What matters is that we learn from our mistakes and recommit ourselves to doing better. To that end, in recent months, Canadians have opened their hearts and their arms to families fleeing the ongoing conflict in Syria, and from the moment they arrived, those 31,000 refugees were welcomed — not as burdens, but as neighbours and friends — as new Canadians.

(*spoke in French*)

That effort has brought Canadians together. In an almost unprecedented fashion, the Government has worked with the business community, engaged citizens and civil society to help the newcomers adapt to their new country. But our efforts will not truly be successful until those refugees have become established, full-fledged members of the Canadian middle class. I want the General Assembly to know that this objective is within our grasp — not because of what we have done, but because of what they are themselves.

(*spoke in English*)

Refugees are people with the same hopes and dreams as our own citizens. But while our people have felt anxiety, Syrians faced catastrophe. We all know where Syria's middle class is: they are living in refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. They are moving across Europe, looking for a place to set down roots, to get their kids back into school, to find steady work and to become productive citizens. Refugee camps are teeming with Syria's middle class: doctors and lawyers, teachers and entrepreneurs. They are well educated. They work hard. They care about their families. They want a better life — a safer and more secure future for their kids — as we all do. When I say, therefore, that I hope that the Syrian refugees we welcomed will soon be able to join our middle class, I am confident that we can make that happen, and we will do it by offering to them the same things we offer to all our citizens — a real and fair chance at success for everyone.

(*spoke in French*)

We are going to do all we can to build a strong middle class in Canada. We are going to invest in education, because it gives the next generation the tools they need to contribute to the world economy and to succeed. We are going to invest in infrastructure because it creates good, well-paying jobs for the middle class and helps to make our communities better places to live, work and invest. We are determined to build an economy that works for everyone — not just the wealthiest 1 per cent — so that every person benefits from economic growth. And we are going to refuse to give in to the pressure of trading our cherished values for easy votes. The world expects better from us, and we expect better from ourselves.

(*spoke in English*)

In the end, there is a choice to be made. Strong, diverse, resilient countries like Canada did not happen by accident, and they will not continue without effort. Every single day, we need to choose hope over fear and diversity over division. Fear has never created a single job or fed a single family, and those who exploit it will never solve the problems that have created such anxiety. Our citizens, the nearly 7.5 billion people we collectively serve, are better than the cynics and pessimists think they are. People want their problems solved, not exploited.

Canada is a modest country. We know we cannot solve these problems alone. We know we need to do this all together. We know it will be hard work. But we are Canadian, and we are here to help.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.